

Special Features This Issue

Goodbye Jim Thayer – 2011 Kokopelli
Bishop Harbor Messabout
Circumnavigating Deer Isle and Isle au Haut
Gippsland Lakes Cruise – Foggy Paddling



**messing
about in
BOATS**

Volume 29 – Number 8

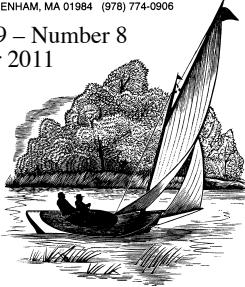
December 2011



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Commentary...

Bob Hicks, Editor

I guess anyone of you who has gotten way out at this far end of life where I am has experienced the sadness of losing long-time friends who shared their lives with us at some time along the way. My work has brought me into contact with hundreds of people over 29 years on a more than casual basis and amongst them dozens have become long-time close friends even if we were not geographically proximate.

A couple of years ago we lost Phil Bolger. Last spring it was Dynamite Payson. And now Jim Thayer has reached the end of his cruise. We all shared a common attitude about how to live our lives, essentially by staying out of the mainstream world by pursuing our own peculiar interests energetically enough to wring livelihoods from them.

Jim had a lot to do with what this magazine became. I've mentioned before how his little occasional newsletter, *The Tholepin*, was one of the stimuli that encouraged me to launch this magazine when I was looking around for something to do in 1983 after I sold my motorcycling magazine after 24 years of doing that. I had gotten interested in traditional small craft and Jim's *Thole Pin* was talking to me, whenever it came out. Its erratic publication schedule (!) was its chief flaw, Jim put it out when he had time between his boat building projects. At one time Jim had taught school so he was no stranger to the written word, he had an easy way of telling his stories resembling somewhat the Will Rogers style.

Messing About in Boats sort of upstaged Jim's *Thole Pin* with our regular twice-monthly publication schedule, offering many more of the sort of stories that he had been circulating. But he showed no resentment at all, perhaps it was a relief to him to be free of the demands of regularly publishing his newsletter. He was not a guy who paid a lot of attention to schedules. This was easy to do with no “supervisor” standing over him driving his work output. Anyway, he not only showed no resentment over *MAIB* appearing on the scene, instead he jumped aboard and became ultimately our most prolific contributor.

In our index of published articles running from 1983 to 2000 Jim has 71 feature

articles! I dunno how many more we've published since 2000 as there is no index and I have yet to thumb through the 216 issues to date since then looking for them. I think there are plenty and even on the basis of an average of one every six issues up until 2000, there could be another 36 or so.

Jim wrote about a broad range of topics. Many were reports on events he attended, especially those he organized in the far western desert country, Kokopelli and Starvation. He also discussed his ideas on small boat design, including a number of his own designs. He described some of the building projects he undertook and other issues surrounding his lifework, such as the time when he and Janis uprooted for good from the Virginia tidewater country to their second home in the high country of Colorado. Jim had a lot of boat carcasses, molds and derelict hulls scattered around the Virginia place that he had to get rid of! He eloquently described the trauma surrounding this in “Ma Sold the Farm” in the June 1, 1993 issue. It's a classic and we'll be reprinting it, along with some of his other “best” tales over the coming year.

When we lost Robb White (another kindred spirit) in 2006 I subsequently ran a year-long series of the “Best of Robb White” in his memory. I plan to do the same with Jim's writing starting in the January issue for a year. Robb's family subsequently organized Robb's work into a 600+ page book (*FLOTSAM & JETSAM*) published by Breakaway Books. I cannot say that this will happen with Jim's work, it's a lengthy, time consuming process to gather up and collate so many worthy stories into a book. I can say that Jim's writing is deserving of this and perhaps in time something of the sort will be done.

I well and truly will miss Jim, his stories arriving periodically, typed out with photo prints (later computer printouts) attached, annotated in his sprawling handwriting were always a welcome item in the mail (yes, snail mail). Whatever the topic he'd always wrap it up (and even emails [gasp] in recent years) with his signature benediction:

“Fair winds, clear wood, sweet sheer, cheap booze, good wine and all the best.”

On the Cover...

Longtime contributor to our pages, boat designer and builder, small boat traveler and adventurer, and storyteller, Jim Thayer looks out over Lake Powell at dawn on his last Kokopelli adventure in September. A few weeks later Jim passed away at age 80 after a long life living as he wished to messing about with small boats. Lots more about Jim in this issue.

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You write to us about...

Help Wanted...

Ash Breeze Co-Editor Needed

I regret to announce that I will be unable to continue as co-editor of the TSCA *Ash Breeze* after April 1, 2012. Mike Wick will also be stepping down but is willing to continue handling the Corporate Sponsorships and advertising. Andy Wolfe (current TSCA president) asked me to put together a job description, which follows. I thought your readers might like to know in case any one (or more!) of them would be interested in taking on a volunteer journalistic role.

Ash Breeze Co-Editor:

Research story/photo ideas in keeping with overall TSCA mission; make best effort to maintain geographic balance of articles among nationwide range of TSCA chapters; make best effort to publish without violating copyright law; make best effort to secure largest/best quality image files available.

Develop ad artwork as required; typesetting text; editing as necessary to fit; converting color images to hi-res grayscale as required; page assembly/desktop publishing; create page proofs for authors' approvals; copy of full issue to co-editor, sitting president and third parties as required; coordinate proofreading and changes with authors, co-editor and third parties; coordinate timely mailing list generation; submit list to mail house for REQUIRED quarterly NCoA hygiene; coordinate advance postage payment with mailhouse.

Submit complete PDF file to pre-press vendor; notify print vendor and mail house that print file has "dropped" (vendor coordinates prepress delivery to printer, printer coordinates delivery to mail house);

Advise print vendor of print run quantity and bulk shipment breakdown; provide sign-off on mail house addressing format; dispose of leftovers as required; provide electronic versions to TSCA webmaster and Flat Hammock Press for archiving.

Production cycle: Typically seven to eight weeks total. Editorial deadlines: January 1, April 1, June 1, October 1. Advertising by 21st of same month; approximately three weeks for editorial assembly and page layout; approximately one week for proofing and corrections; print cycles USUALLY start on first of following month; pre-press, approximately four to five days; print, approximately ten days; mailing approximately three to five days.

Interested applicants should contact Andy Wolfe: Mariner Media, Inc., 131 W 21st St, Buena Vista, VA 24416, phone (540) 264-0021, fax (540) 261-1881; email info@MarinerMedia.com

Ned Asplundh

Information of Interest...

Help Finish Our New Gundalow

The gundalow could save the New Hampshire Seacoast. This new gundalow has this mission. To help us achieve this would

you like to adopt a plank, a trunnel, the propeller or even the mast? It only takes a minute to make a gift online. We only have \$290,000 left to raise!

Your gift will allow us to complete the flagship for the next generation of maritime stewards, a catalyst for caring about the rivers and bays of the Piscataqua Maritime region of New Hampshire and Maine. Starting in 2012, you'll be able to join us for day sails, river festival excursions, school and youth program sails, teacher workshops, corporate charters and private rentals. The new gundalow has a motor so it can get places faster and it can carry more people. It can carry scientific equipment.

Whether you know it or not, our river is in tough shape. Storm water runoff, septic systems, fertilizers, development, erosion, sedimentation and pollution are taking their toll. The precious eel grass is fading. The oysters are all but dead. Our rivers have been declared officially "impaired." If you live here but you never actually SEE the river you live near, if you never get exposed to it, then how can you be expected to care? We want you to get your hands wet. We want you to fall in love with the rivers again.

We lead busy lives. The rivers seem distant things and our attention is focused elsewhere. We don't seem to understand that just as rivers live, rivers die. If these rivers die, we won't have to worry about our property taxes or having too many tourists. If the river goes, nothing will matter. The new gundalow will be our watchdog.

Molly Bolster, Portsmouth, NH

(Excerpted by permission from "Who Needs Another Gundalow?" Copyright © 2011 by J. Dennis Robinson, all rights reserved. Robinson's column appears in the *Herald* every other Monday and exclusively online at his independent website SeacoastNH.com.)

CRBB Scow Credit

Thanks for the space you devoted to our CRBB scow project, it was great. There is one issue I need to address. The article has a shared byline. Most of the article was written by Jason Moser, PHD, outreach coordinator for Florida Public Archaeology Network, Central Region. A quick reference to Jason and FPAN http://W-ww.f2ubricarchaeology.orgLc_rey would help. Thanks.

Steve Kingery

3,300+ Model Boat Images

I'm the person who put together the Index for *MAIB* on your website covering 1983-2000. I have since gotten quite involved with model boats. I have a FLICKR page www.flickr.com/pondyacht, which contains over 3,300+ images of model boats from 70+ countries spanning 236 years (1775-2011).

My initial objective was to capture the innocence of children playing with model sailboats from times gone by, but it expanded to a worldwide collection of digital images of model boats.

I would appreciate your mentioning my FLICKR page.

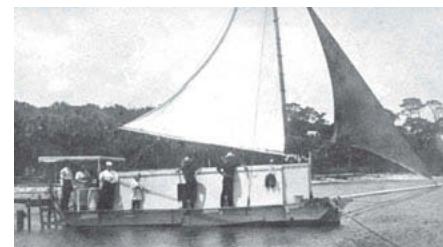
Dave Thibodeau, Hopkinton, NH



Flowering Canoes

Re: the aluminum blossom of boats in Buffalo on page 5 in the October issue, I don't know which came first, that flower or the one pictured here. These boats are at Museum of Contemporary Art in LaJolla California (sort of near where the artist Nancy Robbins lives!). Just thought you'd be interested in seeing another version. My photo was taken in March 2007.

Ken Weeks



A Really Neat Boat

Here's a really neat boat, just add some windows, an air conditioner and call it a "Fancy Crystal River Luxury Cruise Boat." This isn't one of your early creations, is it, Dave? Somebody's offering this postcard for sale on eBay. Opening bid was only \$99.95! Thought about you guys at the Tiki Hut when I saw this.

Dan

Advice for the Autumn Boater

Boats get into trouble
if you leave them
for too long.
They can pout
and as you know,
they can bite
if they are really put out
about being abandoned.
Buy the boat a trinket,
something bronze or stainless,
and tell her
the season is not over yet
even if it is.

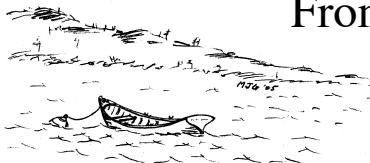
Annie Homes, San Diego, CA

Projects...

Woodstove Season

We're not looking forward to winter, but I guess that's the dues we pay for living up here in Maine the rest of the year. In the issue before last there was an ad for a 13' Whitehall that I felt compelled to follow up on. Long story short, it was one of the Thayer/Mayer boats that I built 18-20 years ago. I bought it back and intend to refurbish it over the winter. Between that and a rehab of a Gloucester Light Dory that Dynamite built, I have a couple of fun projects lined up for the "woodstove season".

Tim Mayer, ME



From the Journals of Constant Waterman

By Matthew Goldman
(Stonington, Connecticut)

This is nearly as intimate as I am accustomed to be. This weekend, I sail up the Connecticut River and scatter the mingled ashes of my long deceased mother and father upon its waters. My parents died over 15 years ago. Our family owns an unused plot in Cove Cemetery, overlooking lovely Whalebone Cove. Although my parents dwelt in Hadlyme half a century, they were never really a part of the community. My father was politically active in East Haddam, but tiny, rural Hadlyme is centered in Lyme. Though the village spans two townships, only the little church is in East Haddam. That, and one of the one-room schools, the North School. Both were within the view of our home when the leaves were off the trees.

The South School, in Lyme, is by Whalebone Cove, overlooking its confluence with stony Whalebone Creek. While the North School is used as a public hall, the South School is privately owned. When I was a boy, it housed a one-man machine shop.

My parents always had a mailbox at the post office in Hadlyme. Many locals waited for the mail to be distributed in the morning and, having bought coffee at the adjoining store, settled in for a gossip. My father was too impatient ever to do this. Besides, he hadn't the slightest interest in what the village was doing; his mind was on the doings of the world. The politics and economies of nations were worth intellectual scrutiny. The machinations of the village were beneath him; the worldviews of workingmen deemed worthless.

There were other intellectuals in the village; he welcomed the chance to argufy with any. My mother volunteered at the private library up at Goodspeed's Landing. But they both belonged to organizations beyond the scope of towns, and always chaired their committees. They entertained a few local couples but were never invited into homes in the village. My mother was cordial and house-proud; the Lennox china gleamed, the silver glistened.

Though my sister and I attended Sunday school at the Hadlyme Church, the other side of the brook, my parents were never a part of the congregation. On rare occasions, my mother attended the candle-lit Christmas Eve service by herself.

Why should they care to be buried in one of the prettiest spots in Hadlyme? Neither had spent a single minute admiring Whalebone Cove when they were alive. Neither had wandered the shady graveyard, recollecting their neighbors.

The only reason they bought the plot was due to our next-door neighbor. This retired gentleman devoted his time exclusively to landscaping. In addition to having an enviable lawn and productive garden, he assumed the caretaker's duties for Cove Cemetery. As a teenager, I helped him one summer to build a retaining wall for an addition to the crowded burial ground. Besides soliciting funds for the cemetery, our neighbor convinced my father to buy a plot for the four of us in this shady, terraced addition.

I could never get to bury my parents' ashes. I always had some plausible excuse. Neither professed the least belief in any sort of hereafter. I've inherited some hefty doubts, myself. What have bones to do with spiritual things? And if they have, I'd rather broadcast them upon the waters, to enjoy a limitless mingling with the world.

Today, I scatter their mortal remains upon the Connecticut River. First, a scoop at the railroad bridge spanning the mouth of the river. Then a scoop at the Baldwin Bridge just above it. How many thousands of times had each of them driven across it? Then a scoop by the long defunct Ferry Tavern, on the Old Lyme shore, where we spent so many enjoyable outings together.

As I ascend, I spread some ashes at every town I pass. Always some connection with my parents comes to mind. Old Saybrook, Essex, Deep River, Chester and Haddam up the west bank. Old Lyme, Lyme and East Haddam on the east.

Hadlyme, between these last two towns, earns my extra attention. Here spreads the welcoming entrance to Whalebone Cove, which leads to the cemetery. Here plies the ferry, which bore them so many times across the river. This road from the ferry leads to Hadlyme Four Corners. Gillette's Castle, perched high above the landing, stares with stony windows across the valley. Twenty minutes' shady walk away lay our homestead, Shelter Rock Farm; its long green acres my green room of that theater where my parents upstaged one another.

Two miles north of Hadlyme, Goodspeed's Landing, a part of East Haddam, clusters by the bank: the town offices, the old hotel, the Opera House, the lumbering steel swing bridge; the peaceful Rathbun Library up the hill. I scatter a scoop of ashes in memory of this; another scoop in recollection of that.

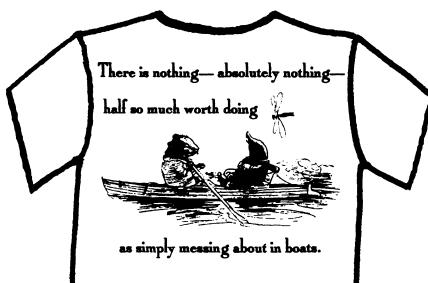
Clearance beneath our bridge is 19'. Thirty yards downstream from one massive pier, I put the helm down and come about and empty the last of their lives upon the huge back eddy churning the gravid waters. A wisp of them will linger about the landing.

Farewell and farewell.

I collapse in the cockpit. My purposeless sails flap. The ignorant wheels of hurrying cars ring on the steel decking overhead.

I idle slowly down my beautiful river. Hamburg Cove, where I hoped to spend the night, has so filled with boats, a procession of disappointed vessels motors from its mouth. I pick up a mooring in hospitable North Cove, by the river mouth, and settle in with my memories.

It must be the wide-eyed harvest moon that keeps me awake tonight.



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Weather is getting to be a "thing" at Lake Powell. Either that, or I'm getting fussy in my old age. There was just enough drizzle that we forsook the BLM table at Hanksville and ate lunch in the truck. It let up enough so that the troops could hike the Thin Man canyon, where we were just loading up when a red trim van whooshed by. Mike Jackson was soon back to touch base. Mike agreed to over-run Hite with us to check out the White Canyon bridge.

The bridge entertained the boys for some time as they timed rocks to determine height, four to five seconds. The physics lesson complete, we made for Hite, where we found Jon Larson, and set about erecting tents and pickup shelters. Too slow! A big black cloud came racing up the lake, pushing whitecaps and ending any hopes of tidy tents.

Things finally settled down enough so that Steven could whip up some hybrid chicken noodle soup for a little hot sustenance. They got Sharon's tent up and people managed to get organized and into dry bags. It's a struggle for me to get into a bag inside the truck cap, so Steven got my big oxygen tank into the backseat of the limo truck and I spent a fairly comfortable night in the passenger Pullman.

Come morning the world had straightened itself out and the fire was going. I soon had the Coleman on the job and was passing out Mrs T's homemade bread, butter fried and jam slathered. It's worth sleeping under a rock for.

My physical condition has reached such a pass that I just sit around and watch, maybe shooting a little video. Fortunately the troops have the rigging and launching drill well in hand and I only make suggestions on where stuff should be stored. Newcomers Sharon and Grady Lee added some baggage but *Nina* managed to swallow most of it. Another cooler on deck was the only sign of more passengers.

About lunchtime we were away on the classic beat up to Four Mile Camp. The Penguin with grandsons Tanner and Grady Lee stayed mostly ahead. Jon with the Ladybug alternated sailing and motoring, while Mike Jackson scooted around in his Hobie Islander. Daughter Sharon and I lounged around while Steven ran the boat. The wind eased and the afternoon was running out so we put a line aboard the Ladybug and helped with the global warming.

Four Mile Camp (end of the last run from Bullfrog and where Randy went swimming in '09) has totally changed as the lake is up about 40' this year. We had a nice shelving shore,

Reefed and ready.



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2011 Kokopelli Pour Three for Four

By Jim Thayer

sandy in spots, with tons of firewood. Sharon did kebabs with noodles on the side. Steven has become quite the gardener so there were lots of tomatoes. There was a big white man fire and some of the boys slept out.

The suggestion to leave camp set up and just explore was well received. At first we thought Farley, but decided White would be more interesting. There was a long reach across a couple of miles and then a good stiff headwind into the fairly narrow canyon. There was a quite massive sandstone about water level, so very limited landing spots.

We were getting along well but it was the sort of going where one keeps one hand on the sheet. Suddenly there was the classic bang and the clew was flapping noisily to leeward. Sharon remembers pandemonium but, in fact, there was only a short discussion about the best move. We decided to take a couple of rolls around the mast and then a string to the outhaul. On a big boat the bronze fitting would have "exploded" but on our modest craft it merely broke. There was no obvious culprit. Maybe the Wilhard clip got momentarily twisted or something.

You will be shocked to learn that since I determined to rig a decent outhaul a couple of years ago, I haven't had a chance to get to it. So here we were, reefed and baggy to boot. My centerboard is pretty well weighted, but tends to swing back some when underway. As a result, we weren't exactly punching to windward. It was determined that we might do better if the board was held fully forward.

It was explained to Sharon how it was important for each crewmember to feel essential to the smooth and efficient management of the ship. She would therefore be entrusted with holding the board fully forward. This only required a tug on the line at the precise moment of head to wind. A little training was required but the project was soon well in hand. I think the improvement was perceptible, and certainly crew skills were improved.

Dewitt with l'artist's Pickle.



We sent word to the Penguin, via Jon, that we would all turn homeward at 1600. Around 1530 we reached a point where the canyon made about a 150° turn back toward the east. In the distance we could see that the boys were reefing to beat back. They had realized that to keep going until the cutoff time would put them way out in left field.

We went ashore so that Steven could check out the other side of the hill. The boys soon gave up sailing and came rowing back, arriving just at the cutoff time. Grandpa gave them a little talk about the sneaky dangers of running before the wind, and we were away for home.

On the way back we continued to educate Sharon, pointing out that on a run there is no need for the board. Well, maybe a little board to give the rudder something to work with. Back out in the open the boys were getting well up to windward and I inquired of Steven just where we were headed. The question brought me to realize that we were broad on the wind and sagging badly. I lose more from forgetting to put the board down than I ever gain from pulling it up.

Back on the beach I was on the hook for supper. It took me maybe 45 minutes to get it all together. As the rice was nearing done the big black guys were quickening their pace out of the west. Everybody got their supper down and cleaned out the pots, but there was not the savoring and lingering that such a repast merited.

Everyone was into rain gear and I had my cockpit cover about 3/4 rigged when it became obvious that we were in for truly serious meteorological activity. I slid down to sit on the cockpit sole, which left my head about even with the gunnels. The shore crew quickly clipped the cover the rest of the way round and I congratulated myself on being able to ride it out and stay reasonably dry. I was wondering if I might doze off and spend the rest of the night there when I was startled by a fierce racket (classic pistol shots) and a shaking of the whole boat. No question, the sail had gotten loose.

There are two ways to stow the sail. One can roll it around the mast as when reefing, or one can grab it by the clew and roll it around itself, being careful to keep good tension on it. The second method makes it quick to deploy, the first is usually just for road trips. Steven had given it two lashings but it still got away. The force and long fingers of a really hard wind blast are hard to credit. I remember on the launch ramp for the Three

Little Pigs trip, when even the road furl was snatched loose.

There was a great deal of shouting and rocking of the boat, but eventually the sail was muzzled and the weather let up. I came out to find that Jon's boat had blown away. He had run it up on the sand but hadn't bothered with the anchor. It was barely discernible, up against the rocks about two miles away.

Steven determined that he and Tanner would go get it. Thinking worst case, they would take enough stuff to spend the night if necessary. Fortunately it got so dark so fast that they despaired of finding it and gave up the idea. There is always a tendency to go off half-cocked at such times. If there is no life at risk, best give it a good think.

It came on to rain during the night and Steven showed up to seal me back in my cocoon. I'd be in dire straits without that boy. Come dawn, Steven and Tanner were out on the point trying to spot the vagrant Ladybug. No sign of her but they sailed past a bass boat which was happy to make a search.

They piled in and were well up White Canyon when they found it. Motor wouldn't start so the bass guys towed them all the way back. If you get a power boater's attention and talk to him you'll generally find him very helpful. This was our second encounter over the years and both were fishermen. I don't draw any conclusions from that.

Incredibly, the Ladybug didn't have a ding on it. I think it has outside chine logs and I can't say what the bottom looked like, but the topsides were pristine. Boggles the mind. I suggested that Jon put his anchor ashore while we broke camp. We agreed on a tow for a start, thinking the wind would build with time and we would turn loose and enjoy the run.

In fact, we whacked the watermelon and continued to lounge around while the breeze passed us up. All I can figure is that the drone of the engine has a hypnotic effect. Warm sun, full of melon, a little short of sleep and global warming is something that happens over the horizon.

Who do you suppose was waiting to greet us on ashore? Capt. Smith was a welcome sight, who last we saw at this very spot two years ago. He was well rested and pitched right in. The company was soon arrayed around his fancy new shelter that shaded a table laden with the usual run of Smith stuff. Dewitt and I were directly at ease in said shade, glasses in hand.

Sharing ship maintenance with Sharon



Steven and the young ones went off to climb on the rocks while Sharon busied herself hanging out stuff to dry. Well, it was all just too pleasant. Here came a BBC. Dewitt and Jon ran for their trucks, Sharon had time to grab the laundry and I slipped into my Pullman. Mike was on the road for home. The wind was modest but this guy was loaded for flash flood. A goodly stream was soon running through Smith's establishment and visibility was short.

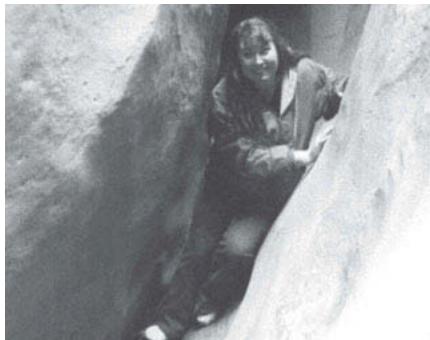
It only lasted a half hour or so but moved a lot of dirt. The park backhoe went right to work and was still cleaning up red mud the next morning. We were afraid the boys were trapped somewhere but they made it back in time to work on supper. There was a surfeit of good stuff and then a white man fire.

When first approaching Dewitt's camp on Saturday I noted a very handsome small boat. She reminded me of a scaled down H-12-1/2, same high crowned transom. I inquired what she might be. Turned out to



Need to work on an artsy pose.

Sharon at Thin Man.



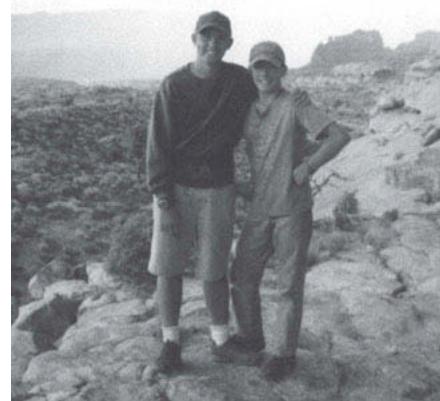
The Sunday dregs; Jim, Sharon, Dewitt, Tanner, Grady Lee, Steven.



be Steve Case's Pickle, which was obvious when pointed out. Tough when a builder doesn't recognize his own hull. Seems Steve has swallowed the anchor (he's into the mountain man thing) so Dewitt got a deal. It's a hard fought battle between Smith and Gale as to who has the most boats.

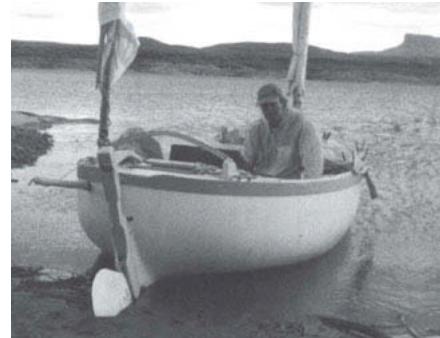
It was a short cruise this year, but memorable nonetheless. To see two grandsons handling a boat so well was heart warming. To lounge aboard while two of my kids handled everything was also rewarding. I only hope I didn't dampen the fun too much.

Editor Comments: A few days after we received Jim's report in mid-October, his daughter Sharon called to tell us the sad, sad news that longtime old friend and kindred spirit Jim had passed away (see my tribute elsewhere in this issue). This was thus the last family outing for Jim, a wonderful way to wrap up a long life of doing what he wished to do with full family support.



Cousin buddies.

Bow out to meet any waves.



Jim Thayer first turned up on our pages when his beach cruiser *Nina* appeared in our April 1, 1984 issue in the ad reprinted below exactly as it appeared in that issue. Jim himself first appeared on our pages later that year in the July 1, 1984 feature report on the North American Small Boat Show at Newport, Rhode Island. That short item appears at the right below exactly as it did in that issue 28 years ago.

Jim's *Nina* next turned up as a cover story in the January 1, 1985 issue, in which I reported on my first opportunity to experience his work at the Traditional Small Craft Workshop at Mystic Seaport the previous June. *Nina* is a fiberglass boat, as were all Jim's earlier designs, but was nevertheless welcomed at this annual gathering of traditional small wooden boat folk, as it had all the charm and appeal of a traditional small boat despite being built of that "other" material. My report is reprinted as it appeared in that issue on pages 10 and 11.

The *Nina* report covers much of Jim's earlier years of designing and building small boats prior to my meeting him. He was an avid rower as well as sailor. An early effort was his "Livery Whitehall," which offered a much more rewarding experience being rowed than sailed. Other craft came along, each endowed with Jim's own unique names for his work, "Lil' Pickle" (mentioned in the *Nina* story) and the "Urbanna Rocket," named after an annual small craft meet in Urbanna, Virginia, that Jim and friends organized ever so long ago.

One of Jim's more exciting concepts was his "A Duckah," a stretched Delaware Ducker. It appeared as our May 15, 1990 cover story shown in the top left photo opposite page. Jim's report, six pages with ten photos, told of his "notion that a mid-winter testing trip to Baja was absolutely crucial to meeting spring marketing deadlines..." He recognized this as thin camouflage for the real reason for the trip, he just wanted to go sailing in winter, by

Goodbye Jim Thayer



remarking that, "...the inescapable logic of this was met with arched eyebrows..." Jim never did let business world realities get in the way of having a good time.

Jim detoured from fiberglass building in 1991 to design and build his "Wee Punkin" sailing pram, a plywood/epoxy craft that he offered ever since as a finished boat, kit boat or plans. His cover story photo, pictured opposite top right, on his swamping tests appeared in the October 1, 1991 issue as "Experiences in the Real (Wet) World."

From time to time Jim would depart in his contributions to our pages from his themes of building and sailing small boats to take up the cause of the small boat builders. One such "tirade" appears at top of the opposite page from April 1, 1993 issue. Jim's operation was always a one man effort (supported by his wife Janis) and his view of the boat building trade from the bottom was one shared by many who chased the same dream.

"Wee Punkin" made Jim eligible to display his work in the revived WoodenBoat Show in 1993 at Newport, Rhode Island, the

March 1, 1994 cover photo at bottom left opposite shows him sailing in to the show docks beneath the overhanging bow of a fishing dragger docked alongside the show with a brisk breeze indeed propelling him along. He was the only small boat out on the water in those conditions at the time.

Nina returned to our cover on the December 15, 2003 issue as shown in the bottom right photo opposite demonstrating its all round beach cruising capabilities on another trip to Baja reported on in that issue. All aboard seemed to be enjoying the beached part of the cruising.

And now on the cover of this issue we have Jim's final appearance aboard his *Nina*, as he sits aboard her watching dawn come up at this year's Kokopelli gathering at Lake Powell after a tumultuous stormy night spent aboard under the boat cover. Jim's report just prior to these pages tells that story. He mentions his failing health limiting his participation in this long running annual gathering he had founded, but participate he still did with much help from family and friends.

I was readying his Kokopelli report for publication when I had the call from his daughter Sharon telling me that Jim had passed away not long after Kokopelli. Not entirely unexpected given the past couple of years with his oxygen bottles but so sad to hear. Perhaps Jim realized it was about over for him and was contemplating his last adventure afloat. I viewed this cover photo as my tribute to a man who had been with us for 28 years (over 100 articles published on our pages), sharing so much of his life and vision with us all. Jim, we're all going to miss you.

THE THOLEPIN MAN

Jim Thayer was late, he arrived Friday evening. Anyone who knows about Jim will understand, his ancient Volvo had broken down on the road. While he was absent Friday, loyal local owners of his Livery Whitehalls and Li'l Pickle craft had their boats in the water for tryout, boasting the merits. There's no salesman as persuasive as the happy customer and Jim certainly has them. He brought with him his new beach cruiser, *NINA*, a substantially larger craft (at 18 feet) than he usually builds. The glass hull is a beamy yet curvaceous

craft, decked and finished inside in wood, with wood spar and spritsail rig. The flat bottom permits easy beaching, the big interior lots of lounging space and room for gear. Now if only Jim can find time to get more made, he offers a kit or finished boat, just as with his Whitehalls and Li'l Pickles. The THOLEPIN? That's Jim's now and again newsletter, great fun to read. Send for a copy, he can be reached at 2106 Atlee Rd, Mechanicsville, VA 23111, include \$3 and you get all his complete collection of information.

Jim Thayer arrives belatedly with his *NINA* beach cruiser.



An elegant and practical beach cruiser quite unlike anything else available. Fitted out as a day sailer or an honest-to-goodness cruiser.

Also available as a bare hull, a very complete kit, or a do-your-own-thing kit. The wooden deck and oval cockpit are a joy to contemplate.

Kindly send along three dollars for information, photos, philosophy, cruising stories and a subscription to our notorious newsletter, THE THOLEPIN (an honest value I assure you).

THAYER & COMPANY
2106 Atlee Rd.
Mechanicsville, VA 23111

Tirade Time

Boatbuilding Commentary April 1993

By Jim Thayer

("Tirade Time", whence cometh the name? Years ago, in the glory days of the "Tholepin", I became sufficiently enamored of my acumen and importance to put forth an occasional opinion, well-reasoned and anchored on the rock of logic. After one particularly astute piece, my good friend and customer, Dusty Rhoades, pronounced it a "tirade". He wouldn't hear otherwise. Rejecting the definition, but taken by the alliteration, my commentary became thenceforth, "Tirade Time").

I had been following with interest the development of ASAP, the American Sail Advancement Program. Their plan for Sail Expo sounded promising and so I sent off for info, appending a few comments on how they might help small boatbuilders. Apparently this was discussed at high levels and I was asked to submit some particulars.

I submitted plans for building a "Wee Punkin" at the show and, while I didn't get a freebie, I was offered space at the same rate as the class associations. I decided to go for it and sent off my \$150.

In due time I received a spiffy ring binder with lots of info including two pages of fine print. Oh, oh! "All exhibits must be carpeted." Well, I've got some odds and ends of old carpet. Hold on! "Carpet must be installed by union carpenters." There was a half hour minimum and these guys cost \$47.08 per hour. They also have to carry in everything that you can't load on your person. Wheels are a union prerogative. Lordy!

Moving right along: Insurance. Two million bucks. Two mil..., get serious. This is for boatbuilders? I've yet to find an insurance man who would even discuss liability for a

been driving across the country to lose money. I don't mind as long as it's fun. But, to get hassled?

Before the day was out I was having serious doubts. Having slept on it, the course became clear. Do the executive thing. Cut my losses. Do something really worthwhile, like Baja.

I was happy and relaxed for a week or so when I chanced on a Harken ad extolling the attractions of Sail Expo. "See a wooden boat being built." My chest tightened. Was that me? Was I letting the side down? Would there be lines at the info desk asking for the wood boat demo? Irate customers asking for refunds? Oh, relax. "Wooden Boat" probably had something going.

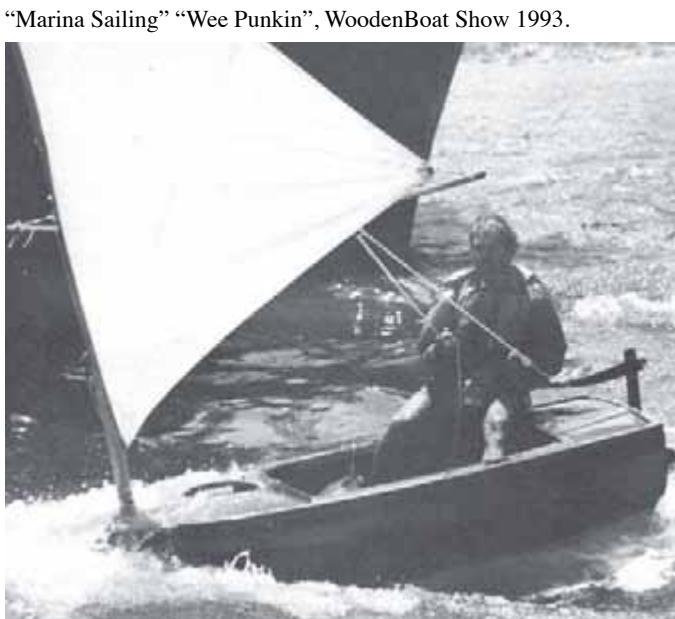
There has been much breast beating about the decline of sailing. Too elitist, so the Yacht Racing Union changes its name. Gary Hoyt promotes boats that are fast and easy. Don't tax the mind or heart. Sailing is inexpensive, blue collars are in.

Dare I say it? Maybe we are just a nation of wimps. Being a sailing potato sure beats getting wet, and the beer is always cold.

ASAP, with SailExpo, is hoping to turn things around. I hope they do. It sure would have been fun but I guess the industry will just have to make it without me.



Sailing "A Duckah", Sea of Cortez 1990.



"Fair Winds, Clear Wood, Sweet Sheer, Cheap Booze, Good Wine, and All The Best"

been driving across the country to lose money. I don't mind as long as it's fun. But, to get hassled?

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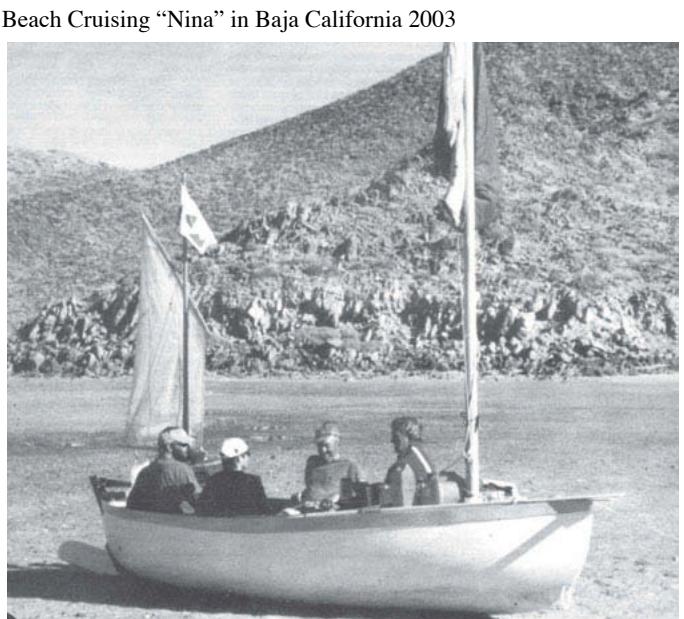
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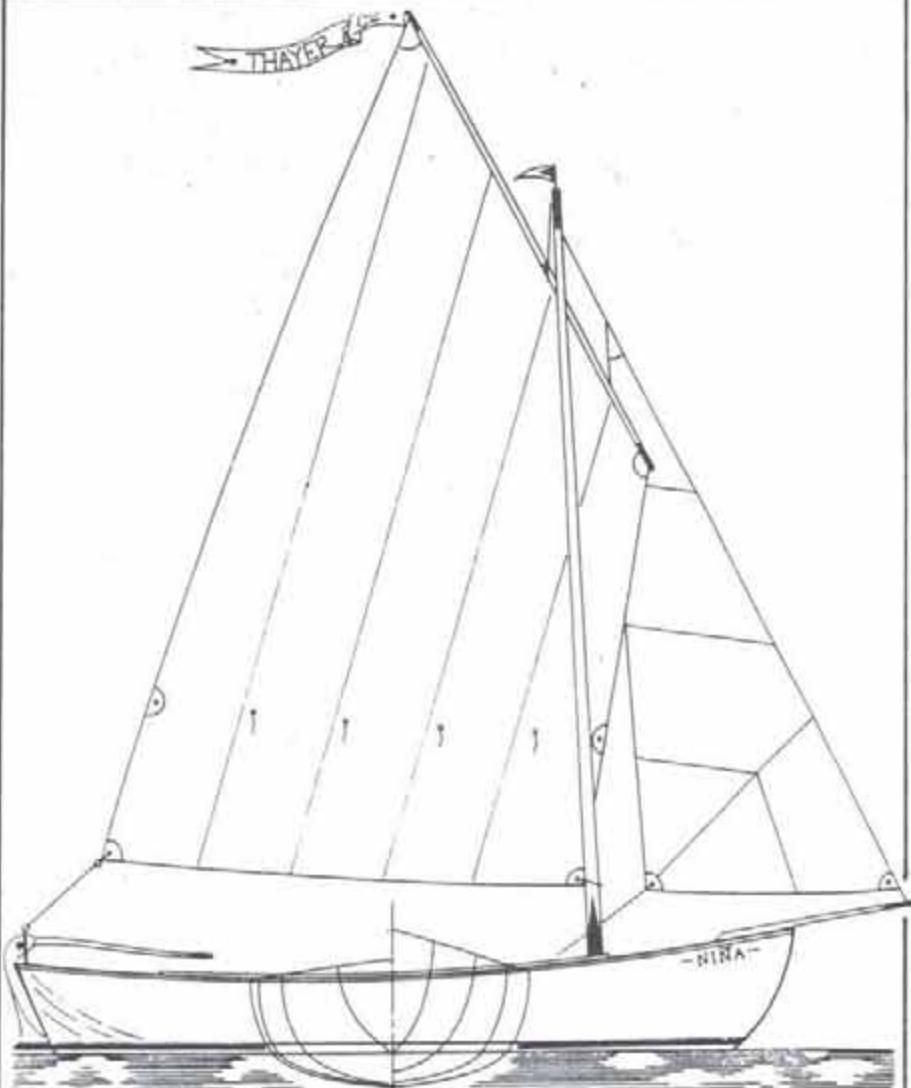
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"Wee Punkin" Swamping Tests 1991



Beach Cruising "Nina" in Baja California 2003



NINA... an elegant beach cruiser

When NINA can't be sailed she can be rowed, Jim at the sweeps.



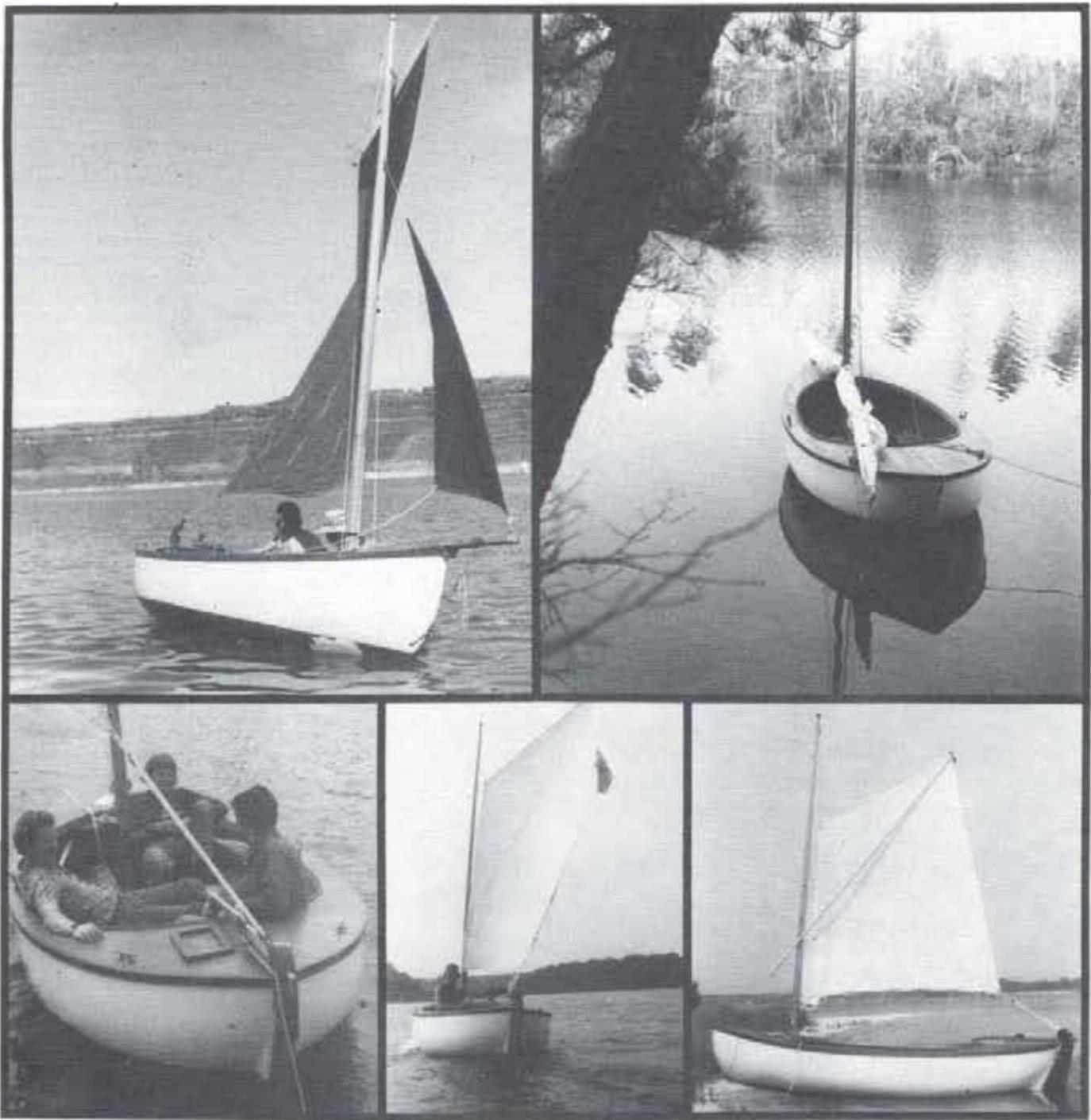
Several years ago after I had gotten into traditional small boats and joined the TSCA and begun to meet like minded people, someone told me about a little mimeographed publication that came out now and again called THE THOLEPIN. It was put out by a guy named Jim Thayer from Virginia, and Jim built traditional types of small boats, but in FIBERGLASS! Somehow, despite this aberration from purity, Jim had retained the interest and loyal enthusiasm of many who preferred their boats to be WOODEN! Jim would turn up now and again at traditional wooden boat gatherings with one of his fiberglass Whitehalls or "Lil Pickles" rowing boats and be welcomed.

The THOLEPIN was trying to do what I decided to do with this magazine, talk about the interesting things people were doing in small boats. It's biggest obstacle was that it came out now and again, mostly when Jim had the time in amongst building his boats to order. And it was a stapled together collection of typewritten pages, pasted up willy-nilly, with few photos or illustrations. But, I loved it as did others who got to see it, because of what Jim was saying. In his rambling tales of boat meets, trips to deliver boats all over the country to customers, visits all along the way, he was telling us how much pleasure it was to enjoy such boats. His own pilgrimages sounded often like trial and travails for he travelled extensively ALL OVER THE COUNTRY in ancient old pickups and station wagons hauling trailers loaded with finished boats for his customers.

Thayer & Co. is family business. Jim builds boats mainly, THOLEPIN also did serve each issue to bring readers the latest news of what he was offering. And the very latest has been NINA, a very salty looking, traditionally styled 18 foot beach cruiser.

Jim introduced NINA at the Small Boat Show last spring in Newport. He was nowhere to be seen on opening day, Friday, but at his float were several of his Whitehalls and a Lil Pickle (that NAME? It comes from the green color of the mold on which he builds it!) The people working the display were local owners of Jim's boats, his CUSTOMERS! They were filling in for the missing Jim. He was on the road between Virginia and Newport getting his ancient Volvo tow car repaired. He turned up Saturday morning rowing into the boat basin in NINA, almost completed.

"The boat I finished off for the Show is still out in Colorado," Jim explained, "so I had to rush this one to completion in a hurry in Virginia." Colorado? Yes, Jim has a seasonally migrating boatbuilding business, winters he builds in tidal Virginia near the Chesapeake. Comes on summer humidity and he goes to the mountains in Colorado where the climate is highly conducive to good epoxy curing. Back and forth across most of the country. Usually by rambling routes too, delivering boats both ways to customers. So Jim's schedule is influenced by many factors. And so he was late.



NINA also can sport a standing lug rig (top left). At rest, a pretty craft if plump. Across the bottom: Plenty of sprawling room, making tracks, on the beach.

But, NINA was worth waiting for. She is a plump craft, but pleasingly so. Jim's idea was a beach cruiser, a lot of room to ease back and mellow out while sailing the local shoreline comfortably in a boat that just has that oldtimey look to it. The sprit rig with jib works well enough at this performance level, the double ended hull, though plenty beamy, moves easily through the water, the mast-head banner adds a bit of flash, and under the spacious cockpit seating is lots and lots of room for food and drink. Especially iced beer in summer.

I enjoyed an hour on the water at Mystic in NINA in June, with friends

while Jim ran along the waterfront to photograph his creation in action. The breeze was mellow on Sunday but just right for the style of cruising this boat suggests.

NINA at 18 feet falls into this area of camper/cruiser I've been exploring as interesting craft turn up. Four people can sprawl in total comfort daysailing and two can comfortably camp aboard overnight with a boom tent set (if you choose to fit a boom, Jim had a loose footed sprit sail on at Mystic. Like his Livery Whitehalls and Lil Pickles, NINA can be order in any stage of finish, from bare hull on up, and as a do-it-yourself kit

complete with all the bits and instructions for finishing.

Jim Thayer builds pretty much to order, and he's a busy guy much of the time. The best way for you to find out more about his boats is to send him \$3 for a sample issue of THE THOLEPIN ("An honest value, I assure you") and some photos, philosophy, cruising stories and such information. Jim's address is 2106 Atlee Rd. Mechanicsville, VA 23111. Be warned, THE THOLEPIN can be addictive. Ex-schoolteacher Thayer knows how to write that down home, funky stuff that'll grab you right into his world of messing about in boats.



Steve topless.



Jane.



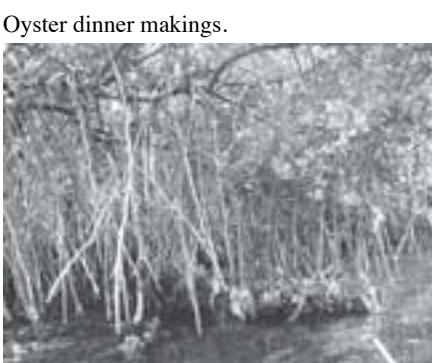
Rich at rest.



Dave.



Oreo on bow.



Oyster dinner makings.



Gang with Skyway on horizon

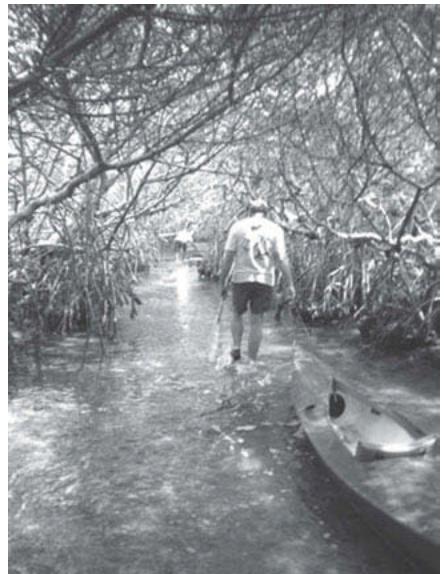
nightmare. Sharp oysters all over. We formed a kayak train and carried the boats in that one, being really careful not to fall. Little Oreo just took it all in like this was an everyday occurrence, didn't fall off Kathy's boat at all.

The whole trip was about six miles of easy going except for the last miserable mile. We popped out of the last tunnel back into Bishop Harbor and faced a 20mph wind right in our faces. Tired after a long day, this last challenge just about did us in, old pros and rookies alike. It brought out the best in us (what a bunch of bullshit). What it really did was let us know that if we didn't paddle like hell and not stop we'd end back up in the swamp for the night with no way out. That was plenty of motivation to keep even me pumping away, and sweet little Jane was right next to me hollering at the top of her lungs lots of unladylike sailor words. Talk about reaching way down for the last ounce of strength, I don't know if she was cussing at me or the wind.

We all made it back to find Red standing on the bank fishing. We wrapped up the day back at the park emptying the beer cooler and comparing sore arms. All in all a great experience and great day. It's going to be sailboats next time. My arms won't handle another one of these for a while.



Into the mangrove tunnels.





Windy battle to get back.

Owl Beach.

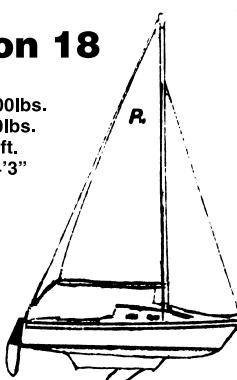


Rod fishing.

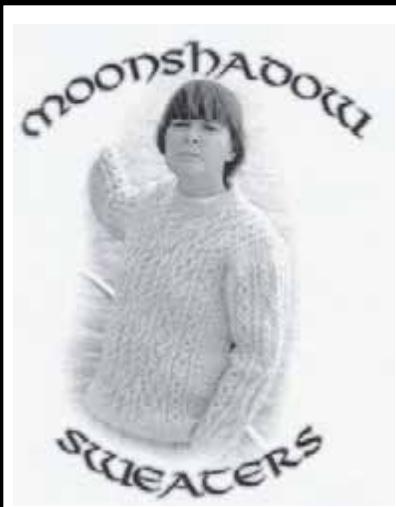
Wild bunch at finish.

Precision 18

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Ballast, Lead, 350lbs.
Sail Area 145 sq. ft.
Draft, Bd. Down 4'3"
Draft, Bd. Up 1'6"
LOA 17'5"
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The Gippsland Lakes is a series of three adjoining lakes, which run for about 40 nautical miles parallel to the coastline in Victoria, Australia. In places the land separating the lakes from Bass Strait is only a few hundred yards wide. The lakes run roughly northeast-southwest. The eastern end is sparsely developed. There's the fishing port of Lakes Entrance just inside the entrance to Bass Strait, then a couple of small settlements which only just qualify as towns. As one continues west, signs of civilisation disappear, giving way to flat windswept country.

The weather changes here can be sudden. The fronts invariably arrive from the southwest, funneling down the shallow lakes and whipping up a vicious chop. It does not do to be caught against the shore in these conditions, but safe anchorages are by no means plentiful. It's barren, harshly beautiful and slightly intimidating. In March this year I went there with my little boat, *Jess*, with the intention of sailing from one end to the other and returning.

I've written about *Jess* in *Dinghy Cruising* before. But to recap, she's a 17' cat yawl from the board of Australian designer Mikey Floyd. He calls these open boats Salty Heavens. They are fun to take out for a daysail single-handed and they can carry a good load of camping gear, or passengers if required. A Salty Heaven will operate safely in winds up to 30 knots, provided she's rigged right and sailed carefully. I've owned *Jess* for about ten years now and she has not yet lost her allure.

Lakes Entrance has a well-maintained launching ramp, but I did not fancy abandoning the car and trailer in that busy town for a week or more. Four miles west is a place called Nungumer. Not a "place place" with shops and people, but more a mark on the map. I descended down a winding road to a dead end. There were a couple of neglected looking jetties to which were tied a few down-at-the-heel boats.

The only people in sight when I arrived were a couple of weather-beaten looking characters manoeuvering a battered aluminum boat onto a trailer. They looked at *Jess*, with her smart black paint and varnish, with incomprehension. They towed their boat up the ramp and, as I was rigging up, began cleaning a couple of good-sized flatheads. Not a word was spoken.

I had been unable to find detailed navigational charts of the Gippsland Lakes. The best I could come up with was something called a "grid chart" which had been prepared

Gippsland Lakes Cruise

By John Little

Reprinted from *Dinghy Cruising*
Journal of the Dingy Cruising Association
(UK)

An Australian Cruise

John Little takes *Jess*, his Salty Heaven cat yawl into the Gippsland Lakes and reports back from an area of stark beauty, home to possums, black swans, wallabies and Eastern Australian grey kangaroos.

by the Volunteer Coast Guard at Paynesville, one of those little towns. A note advised that it was not designed for use in precise navigation. As if to emphasize the point, there was no compass rose, although it did show true and magnetic north. I've found when cruising inland waterways it's easier to use an orienteering compass than try to steer precise compass courses.

The orienteering compass consists of a compass with the points inscribed on a rotating ring. This is mounted on a rectangular Perspex base with a "line of travel" arrow pointing towards one end. One places the compass on the chart with the edge of the base pointing where one wishes to go. Rotate the ring until the N points to the printed magnetic north. Lift the apparatus off and turn the whole thing around until the north-seeking needle points to magnetic north. The line of travel arrow is now pointing towards your next landmark. As long as I know where I am to begin with it works well.

Hard to See the Ground

It was about two o'clock by the time I'd loaded and rigged the boat. I could see a rill of wind a couple of hundred yards out from the shore. I sculled out, hoisted the mizzen, then the mainsail, and turned southwest. Almost immediately the pivoting centreboard bumped the bottom. The water in the lakes is quite opaque, so even in very shallow water it is often hard to see the ground.

I steered out from shore a bit and continued on. The wind was on the quarter at about eight knots so I left the board up. The lake here is about a half-mile wide, more like a big river than a lake. I love to go along close to shore looking at houses and marinas and peo-

ple and other boats. It was Saturday of a long weekend. Children were frolicking on the shore, white sails pirouetted in the distance, a pair of black swans, disturbed by my passing, did a laborious low level take-off, their wing tips leaving pock marks on the water as they struggled to gain altitude.

I felt a hot pain. Looking down I saw a March fly greedily sucking blood from my leg. If ordinary flies are the F-18s of the airways, March flies are B-52 bombers. They are fat, slow moving, loathsome insects, and they hurt. Unlike ordinary flies they have slow reflexes. Slap! One less pest to bother innocent sailors. But wait, there were more, buzzing around the boat like bees around a hive.

I hastily applied insect repellent to my exposed limbs. But March flies don't give up easily. I'd neglected to cover the tips of my toes, a target which they now homed in on with persistence. Every Australian knows about March flies, but I hadn't thought of the obvious. It was March, right? They were thicker here than any place I've ever been. In the coming days I learned that as long as I covered myself thoroughly with repellent I was safe.

At Lakes Entrance I'd gone to an internet cafe for a weather forecast. A 20 to 25 knot southwesterly change was expected in the evening. The most likely looking lee was Point King on the eastern end of Raymond Island, about five nautical miles from my departure point. Half a mile from there the breeze died.

I row *Jess* standing up facing forward. I've never understood why people want to see where they've been rather than where they're going. I assembled the extended rowlocks and set to work, studying the coastline as I approached. The shore was ringed with a strip of sand, behind which was a flat grassy section giving way to trees. Peeking through the trees was a fine-looking house, not a beach shack, but a dwelling of substance. I drifted up to shore and anchored the boat with a clothesline moor, bow pointing seaward, stern tied to a substantial stump. I walked across a well-kept lawn and as I approached the house a woman of about 70 came out to meet me.

Tricky this. Would they tell me to leave or make me welcome?

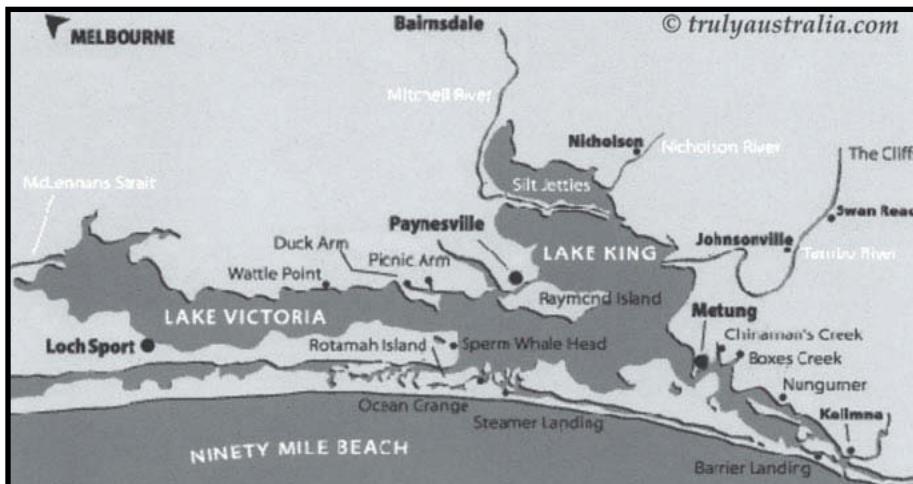
"Can I help you?" A heavy German accent.

I explained what I was doing and asked if they'd mind me camping on the shoreline, off to one side so that I wouldn't be in view.

"Of course not. It's not ours anyway. The strip along the shore is public land. You're not supposed to camp there, but nobody will mind. Is there anything that you need? Water?"

An auspicious beginning. I went back to the boat and lugged my equipment ashore. The tent was set up and I was about to cook dinner when the man of the house, a short, well-dressed fellow with sweptback grey hair, approached. He was ready for a chat. He had no interest in what I was doing, but he was pleased to have found a listener for the story of his life. He and his wife had emigrated to Australia from Germany 30 years ago, he told me, and it was the best thing they'd ever done.

This information was only the prologue to a long and detailed soliloquy. For the next half hour he told me about his work in Germany, his career in Australia, his children and grandchildren, how he built his house, then he started all over again from the beginning.



40 Knots of Wind

The sky to the southwest was growing blacker by the minute. I could hear the rumble of thunder, but he seemed not to notice. At last he ran out of steam and said his goodbyes. I had planned to shred some cooked chicken and mix it with rice. I was just about to put the water on to boil when the first gust hit. Within seconds I was being lashed by torrential rain. Grabbing the chicken I crawled into the tent and zipped it up. And there I stayed for the rest of a long night, reading, dozing, peeking out now and then to check on the boat surging against the stern line. The tent was being buffeted so savagely that I wondered if it would stay up. I learned later that the 20 to 25 knots had, in fact, been 40 knots.

In the morning the sun was out and the breeze had settled to a gentle southwester. I spent the morning doing a circuit of Lake King, which runs north off Lake Victoria. By early afternoon I was back in the main lake and heading west. The chart showed a long indentation, Duck Arm, on the northern shore. Just past the narrow entrance the land hooked around into a perfectly calm little cove with a white sandy beach. Half a dozen motor cruisers and a couple of yachts were moored with stern anchors in the stream and their bows literally resting on the sand. Most had a ladder or a plank for access to the shore. This mooring technique is common in those parts of the lake where the shape of the bottom is suitable.

As I was setting up my tent, the motor-boats started their engines and departed in convoy, leaving only the two small yachts and myself behind. I wandered along the beach to see if I could glean some local knowledge. A young couple was sitting under the awning on the farthest yacht reading. They were locals and knew the lake well.

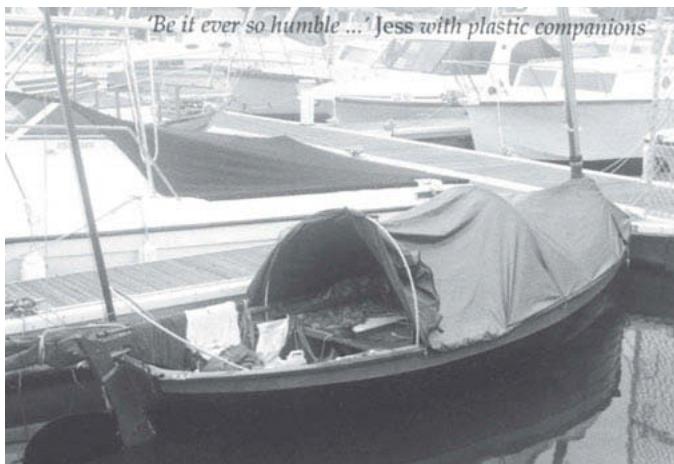
"The western end is a waste of time," the skipper declared. "There's nothing there." If I was going that way the best place was the town of Loch Sport. There was a marina there with hot showers.

The couple from the second yacht was sitting in camp chairs on the beach, reading. This skipper had an entirely different opinion.

"The west is barren and shallow, but it's beautiful, with some lovely deserted creeks. You might even see a sea eagle if you're lucky."

It all sounded good to me. By tomorrow I would be ready for a hot shower, and I felt that a bit of desolation might be just what I was looking for.

"Be it ever so humble..." Jess with plastic companions.



John Little and Jess.

The morning dawned sunny once more. The wind was again from the west and light, very light. From Duck Arm to Loch Sport was a distance of eight nautical miles. Not far, but too far to row. The surface of the lake was glassy, but here and there I spied a slight dapping where little catspaws ruffled the surface. I eased the halyards, replaced the main sheets with a light line, put my weight on the leeward gunwale and pointed the bow to the west.

To Windward in a Calm

The sun beat down out of a clear sky. The sheet sagged lifelessly in the water. Then came a breath. The sail filled, the sheet lifted clear, shedding silver drops, and tightened. And as I knew she would, Jess began to inch her way across the baking surface. She moved slowly, but she moved.

Ghosting to windward in very light weather was hypnotic. I needed to concentrate completely. Point a fraction too high and I'd stall and it would take ages to begin moving again. Allow the boat to sag to leeward and I'd lose valuable ground. For hour upon hour I focused completely on making progress towards our destination. Of course, an outboard motor would have made things easy, but those hours of communion with my Jess were worth more to me than the convenience of some rude engine.

About a mile from Loch Sport the breeze died. I began to row. It was very hot now, and my body was wet with perspiration. The March flies hovered hungrily, but the repellent did its work. A speedboat with a family aboard altered course towards us.

Quiet anchorage.



"Have to call me dad."

"Dad, there's a bloke turned up in some kind of thing made out of wood. He wants to stay the night. Have we got somewhere?"

Evidently they did. After unearthing the credit card machine from beneath a pile of papers, the youth directed me to a pen. He handed me the key to the showers and went back to his painting.

The town of Loch Sport straggles untidily along the lake shore. Most houses appeared unoccupied. It is a holiday town. People come here for the weekends or school vacation. The rest of the time it is practically deserted. Perhaps they find it disappointing, for every second house had a "For Sale" sign in front. Next to the marina was a modern hotel with a beer garden overlooking the water. There were three patrons beside myself. The beer was cold and the food hot. Both were very welcome after my labours on the water.

Back at the marina I erected the boat tent and crawled inside. Early to bed. Sometime in the middle of the night I became aware of another gale. I could hear halyards rapping against masts and the howl of a strong wind roaring over the sea wall. I was glad not be anchored outside as there was no protection at all from the southwest.

In the morning the breeze was still fresh, naturally from the direction I wished to go. I walked to the sea wall to gauge conditions. There were whitecaps on the lake underneath a lowering sky. For the first time since I'd arrived it was cold. I judged the wind speed to be about 20 knots. One reef or two? To be on the safe side I made it two. I hoisted sails inside the harbour, donned my foul weather gear, tied everything down and blasted out from shelter into the open water.

It was soon apparent that we were a little under-canvassed so I shook out the second reef and the boat felt right. With her heavy load she thrust purposefully through the chop, spray now and then being thrown back over the weather rail. Grand sailing.

Centreboard Depth Sounder

My advisor back in Duck Arm had pointed out a little creek, Blond Bay, at the western end of Lake Victoria. In my efforts to make as much ground as possible to weather, I held each favourable tack until we were close to shore. On a few occasions the centreboard touched. As soon as it did I put the boat onto the other tack. A pivoting centreboard makes an excellent depth sounder.

At the entrance to Blond Bay I was able to bear away and reach down into the gradu-

Blond Bay.

Blond Bay



ally narrowing creek. The land here was flat and treeless and without colour. Under the bleak sky the place had an elemental beauty, reminding me of descriptions of the Thames Estuary I'd read in Maurice Griffith's books. I had no idea how much water we had under our keel. For all I knew it could be inches deep in here, which would make it difficult to beat back out.

But I could not stop now. The atmosphere of the place drew me in. After about a mile the creek narrowed to about 70 yards. Off to starboard there was a little bay. I shot in, rounded up and dropped the anchor in about three feet. The water was still. There was no sound of human activity. No far off traffic noise, no boat engines, just the wind soughing across the marshland.

The country here looked too water-logged for walking. I was content to stay on the boat, erect the tent and lie on my air mattress reading, getting up now and then to look around my landlocked little haven. There was still much of the day and all of the coming night ahead of me. I had no desire to be anywhere but here. Civilisation could have been a thousand miles away. I was utterly alone and completely content.

There was still one more lake to the west, Lake Wellington. It was joined to Lake Victoria by a narrow, winding ribbon of water four miles long. The thought of trying to beat through there was daunting. If only the wind would turn to the east.

In the evening I hunted the dial of my portable radio trying to find a local weather forecast. The following day was, yet again, predicted to have southwest winds. The day after that we could expect severe southwest-erlies with torrential rain, probably lasting for two or three days.

In the morning we headed out. There was enough water in the creek for me to use the centreboard, although again it bumped the bottom once or twice close to shore. I'd definitely have to paint the tip when we got home. Once out of the creek we turned east and spent the next seven hours running past all the places we'd been before.

A Land-Locked Anchorage

Just before Nungumer there was another little creek, Box's Creek, which my friend had recommended. It ran inland to the north. About a quarter of a mile in there was a narrow

Two of the locals.



Two of the locals

© John Little

branch off to the east, which made it a practically landlocked anchorage. As I ghosted up to the head a solitary wading bird watched me with interest. I dropped the sails and quietly slipped the anchor overboard. Again I was completely alone, save for a dozen or so black swans paddling in the shallows a hundred yards away.



Jess with black swans.

I'd been on board for two days now, but I had no desire to go ashore. I had everything I needed. The boat was good. The anchorage was safe. I was glad that there were no other people who I would have to talk to.

In the morning three swans paddled over to say hello. I crept out of the creek and ran the last couple of miles to Nungumer. Stepping ashore, I felt spaced out, jet lagged, giddy. My mind was still back in those deserted creeks. I was having difficulty letting go. I hauled the boat out and drove slowly out to the highway. I could still remember how to drive. The traffic seemed to hurtle past at suicidal speed. Why were they all in such a hurry? The radio news told of a tsunami in Japan, power stations about to melt down. The Middle East was aflame. It seemed as if in the space of a week the world had gone mad.

Or was everything just the same as usual?



The fog arose over the icebergs outside the passage I was setting up camp on, starting out on a paddling trip during my Greenland adventuring in 2008. On the right is the opposite side of the passage.

Wow, was I surprised to open my tent and look out the next morning! The fog was so dense I could barely see across the 650' wide passage. My kayak was situated outside my tent up on the rocks above the tide line, the fog is blowing in from the outside to the west. The fog I later paddled in was much denser, with less than 50' feet of visibility.

I was glad that I had paddled the 1.7-mile crossing to Qaersorsuatsiaq Island the day before. Today it may be hopelessly foggy, who knows, but I had seen this density of fog before in Upernivik this time of year and now there was a slight breeze.

At 09:45am the sun had broken through but the visibility was no better, still very low. As I was bored ashore I decided to take a chance. I started out at about 11:30am, having decided that I ought to paddle in the fog north to Innarsuit. From there I would continue north but hug the rocks if there was no visibility so that I could investigate the passage called Natip Ilua.

This passage is well defined, being flanked with vertical rock cliffs and a few pockets. It begins at Innarsuit and leads eastward toward the tiny town called Naujat. I thought it would probably be safe to paddle along in the fog. I brought my magnetic compass and GPS.

As I was making the crossing I thought to myself, "I wonder if I should paddle down to the peninsula on the opening and leave a few marker rocks so that I know that this peninsula leads directly up to my tent a few hundred feet away." I decided leaving marker rocks was a rather futile idea; surely I would not become that confused in this fog.

So I decided to just head directly across northward from camp and make the the 650' crossing to the small island, Qeqartarsuuaq. I was essentially just following around the southeast and up the north side in a U-shaped route hugging the rocks.

Foggy Paddling A Losing Experience

By Gail Ferris

I headed along the south side of the island to its eastern tip for a mile. I just paddled next to the rocks because I could not see more than a few hundred feet. The fog was not too cold because it was not coming from the ice but rather from the warm water to the west, Davis Strait or Baffin Inlet.

Then I paddled along the eastern edge for half a mile and up just a quarter mile at the most along the north side of the island. All looked familiar and if it did not I convinced myself that I had to be near a cove that was loaded with shellfish and moving northward to a cove without shellfish.

I figured that I could just cross over, heading pretty much due north, and surely I would hit the south facing coastal portion of Innarsuit Island on the opposite side. The crossing was only 2/10ths of a mile, and when I was partway across I could see the upper portions of the cliffs on Innarsuit because the fog was an even color grey and not all that dense.

I stuck to following the rock walls for what seemed like a very long time, passing each unfamiliar cove indentation inlet peninsula for the next 1.7 miles until I reached Innarsuit.

Even though I had paddled several times to Innarsuit I had always paddled on bright sunny days a quarter mile or so offshore, so I had never really familiarized myself with this very different type of detailed paddling along this coast. Previously I was much more interested in exploring all the indentations on the opposite side. I was really unfamiliar with this coast up close. I did not think it mattered then. It was nice to reach something definite, Innarsuit, because I was getting somewhat concerned as to what was real.

I paddled along the vague western coast not completely sure, but I knew I could only

be heading around to and along the south side of Natip Ilua passage. I paddled along heading eastward down the passage until I lost interest because everything just looked the same; there was no change in the topography. I decided that it was pointless to go on so I turned around.

On my way back following along the vertical rock cliffs of the passage was fine, but looking out from the peninsula I was rounding, something was not quite right. Surely I was perfectly safe following the rock walls, I had been there before. I knew that there were no mysterious hidden passages along these escarpments, but then again looking out over the water, things were looking a little fuzzy.

"But that is OK, I can find my way back. All I have to do is just follow the rocks back around and I will be home," I said to myself.

Then I noticed what was a very familiar little island in the bright sun which had particularly distinctive shellfish loaded shallows, but this shore looked somewhat questionable in this fog. I asked myself, "Is that really that island or is this some other island?" On my map that island was not even there. "Oh well, not to worry, after all, that island really is just a few rocks with a tidal rip washing over the shallows."

I continued paddling, hugging the rocks. I heard some dogs so I knew I could only be near Innarsuit again. They were the same dogs that had barked at me before so that was OK. Then I crossed Innarsuit Bay and headed along the rocks now on the south side of the town. I went from bay to bay, losing sense of direction, just hugging the rocks, not knowing which bay was which, gradually heading eastward. I could not tell if I was dipping into a large or small bay. All I knew was that I was just heading along the rocks and that I had to keep the sun on my right side as I headed eastward.

Thoughts now came to mind that I had not bothered to keep track of the time or the direction when making crossings from point to point. Other people do that, not me. I had my GPS with me but I had never bothered

considering that it might be a good idea to learn how to do things such as use the “Go To” point system. All I learned to do, out of necessity, was to take waypoints for my records. I never considered that it might be a good idea to learn how to use the “Go To” function with the waypoints.

As far as the waypoints are concerned it is important to know which waypoint is which because they all look the same on a monitor that does not show any sort of map. To compensate for not having any map I must gather current waypoints on my way out so that I could know which waypoint I would like to “Go To” on the way back.

Nothing like a foggy thinking paddler paddling in the fog! That was me and there I was getting more and more in trouble. I convinced myself “how could I get in trouble?” If worse came to worse I would just follow the rock walls around and surely I would get back to my tent. After all, I was just paddling around a “U.” I could either follow the outside or the inside of the “U.” The shortest way would be to cross over from the outside to the inside of the “U” and then back again to the outside of the “U” where my tent was located.

So here I was, gingerly paddling along the rocks, occasionally looking south where there ought to be good spot to cross over, trying to figure out where I ought to begin my crossing. Fine I thought but when?

“This does not look too good! Looks like open water over there! I am not crossing that only to wind up out in the open water.” Little did I realize that the fog had created this aura of brilliant brightness over the water. The innocent fog had become a 50’ high brilliant glow just over the water topped with a ceiling of grey fog. This brilliant glow of white that spread out evenly over the water as I looked south was reflection into the fog of sunlight from the water. I did not see this glow when I looked north, except over a few icebergs, and in this situation the glow was an even arc shrouding an iceberg which was also this same type of light reflection.

Where I could have been making a crossing of a mere half a mile, all I saw was this glowing fog. It seemed impossible to me that I was just seeing a reflection and behind it was actually the island. I could not imagine the island appearing as anything other than grey fog in front of the dark rock-cliffed island, Qeqertarsuaq. “Surely the brilliant glow can only be coming from open water,” I told myself as I continued paddling eastward down the coast for an inordinately long time.

Finally I decided I ought to cross. What a great idea that was! So there I went paddling across, so I thought,, and next thing I

come upon is this island. I consoled myself thinking it was a little island off Qeqertarsuaq. “How lovely,” I thought, “now all I have to do is just keep following the curve of this island I think I remember, but who knows, anything is possible, maybe it is one of those peninsulas that is only connected at low tide. Oh well, the sun is on my right side, so that is alright.”

I gingerly kept paddling until I saw a fish drying rack on my right that I had seen on a previous day’s paddle and it was only in one place because there was only one fish rack like that anywhere around. Oh no! “Guess where the fish rack was,” I said to myself. That fish rack was down in the bottom of the northeastern wing of the passage sitting on Innarsuit Island, which is on the bottom side of the “U”. I am paddling around, not on the topside along Qeqertarsuaq where I thought I was.

“Oops, well here I am and it is definite,” I said to myself, “and I am glad I have been here before. OK,” I told myself, “this is easy, now all I have to do is turn around, follow this wall out to the end of the passage back west until I get to the opening where I can cross from the east side to the west side of the bottom of the “U”.”

Oh, there is that inexplicable island again. Now I know that it is the island where there were dogs and remnants from people. How interesting that I never noticed the dogs that I have just passed by on my way into the bottom of this passage. It is interesting what you don’t see unless you are expecting to see it. There is nothing like being a little confused in the fog.

I realized how very foolish it had been that I assumed all this time that I would be perfectly safe paddling along the rocks so I never bothered with taking any salient waypoints nor kept track of time. I told myself, “Now I will just follow this wall until I think I am getting to the intersection where I can cross over to Qeqertarsuaq Island”. Well, I crossed the intersection and in the fog I found that the sun was on the wrong side, my left side, which was impossible unless I was now paddling up the north side of Qeqertarsuaq Island.

In frustration, because I did not want to admit anything was wrong, I just kept paddling, telling myself to just keep going and that things would work out. It is amazing how irrational one can be when scared and confused. I gave up on the compass because the magnetic compass was 45 degrees off and I did not trust it and the compass on the GPS was fine but I was just too mixed up because I had no sense of time or distance while I have been trying to follow this “U”.

And sure enough I came upon an orange net float tied off at the opening of a little harbour and inside was a lone fishing boat. Of course, that harbor I had seen before and it could be only one place, on the north side of Qeqertarsuaq Island. I knew the last time I saw that net float, the only one for miles around anywhere, that there was some sort of *déjà vu* about it.

“Oh boy, here I go again,” I said to myself. This can only be the little harbor that I saw last time and this on the north side of the big island, not anywhere else. What I have done is paddled across the “U” passage and headed up the north side of the Qeqertarsuaq Island because I never noticed in the fog that I had merely skipped across the bottom of the “U”. I must have paddled crossing over in only two-tenths of a mile in the fog never realizing what was going on.

Luckily as I was retracing my paddling I knew that I was definitely paddling along the east side of Qeqertarsuaq Island. I knew that I would have to religiously stick to every little indentation in the coast no matter how tiny because who knows where I would wind up next.

“Wow the sun came out. How weird.” Whew, I recognize where I am but I would have never guessed that I am at this intersection. OK, I am really tired of all this confusion. To be extra safe I will take the most conservative route. I will paddle across to Innarsuit Island. I will follow that coast line exactly.”

There is only one possible confusing spot, which is a very short hop across another opening. That opening I know very well because it opens to a round area and has a narrow 10’ wide restriction in the end of it, should I get lost again.

I will cross over.”

“OK, I did that. Now I will just paddle up the coastline of the little unnamed island my tent is on and I should be OK.”

“Well, where is that tent,” I thought to myself. “It ought to be anywhere along here. Maybe I am lost again because it is taking a very long time to find my tent. Oh, this looks like the peninsula with the rocks on it but where is my tent. Oh! Oh, this is not good. I know there are two peninsulas and this is the first one, the next one is where my tent really is. Whew, there it is.”

Getting lost in the fog is not fun but it is great for an adrenalin rush. I have to learn how to use the “Go To” function on my GPS and take salient waypoints all along the way if I want to ever find my way back to my tent in the fog.

If this tale seems confusing at times, consider the conditions it attempts to describe.

Early morning outlook.

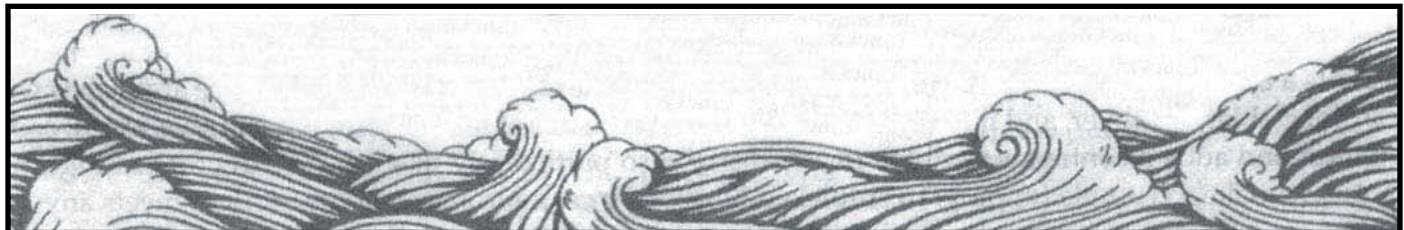


Kayak on the rocks.





The fog lifts.





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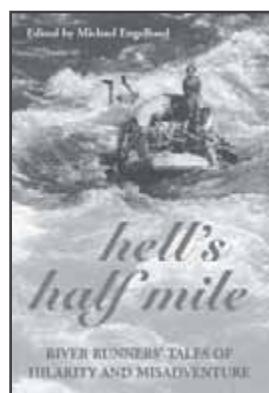
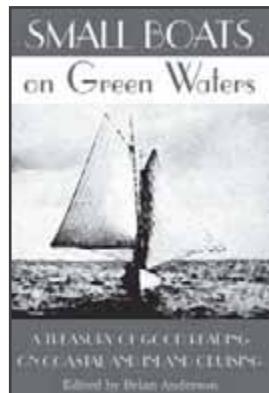
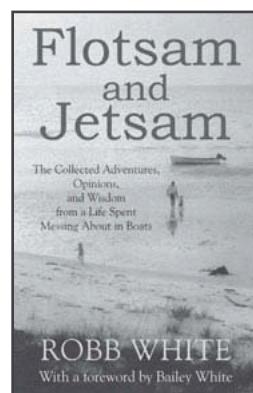
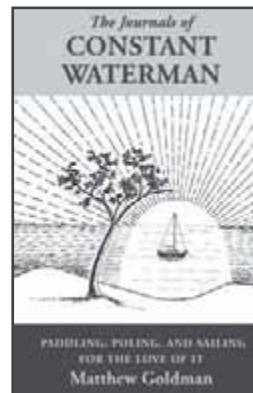
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Circumnavigating Deer Isle and Isle au Haut, Maine

Maine's Most Popular Area for Sea Kayakers

For over ten years I have heeded MITA's (Maine Island Trail Association, see end notes) warning about the area around these two magnificent Maine islands, saying that "this area is extremely popular with all kinds of boaters during the busy summer season." The guidebook repeatedly points out that it might be difficult to find an empty camping spot on most of the islands in Merchant Row. And since I could not see myself shopping/hopping around from island to island to find a free site for my little Eureka tent, I have avoided this area or sped through it on my solo trips from Cape Porpoise (or Portland) to Machias.

I have to admit, though, that I would have liked to stop over at Hell's Half Acre, Harbor or Kimball Island, just to mention a few. I had sailed through this area many times and knew how truly spectacular this island world off Stonington was, when the sun is out, that is, because only too often fog hangs around here longer than in other areas of the Maine coast.

But this non-assertive compliance of mine was going to change this year. I decided. I was determined to find out how crowded this area really was, and why not check it out during the height of the Maine summer season, in July and August.

The Plan

Since I am not a drifty day tripper or weekender, I had to come up with a plan. I needed a real goal, a trip. A circumnavigation of the two islands was the first thing that popped into my mind, not just because I like circumnavigations, but also because one could do those trips alone without a big car shuttle involving other people. Being a compass-oriented person, always thinking in compass terms, I would start and finish at the most northern tip of Little Deer Isle and round both Deer Isle and Isle Au Haut in a counter-clockwise direction, in about a week or eight days. Isle au Haut, by the way, means "The High Island" and was named by Samuel de Champlain in 1604, along with Mount Desert Island, "The Bare (granite-topped) Island".

My put-in was to be a little cobble ramp across from the picturesque Pumpkin Island Light at the NW entrance to Eggemoggin Reach. I knew there even was limited parking alongshore, but leaving my car there for eight days did not seem advisable or kind to other boaters launching their boats for day trips or weekends, especially since Nancy kindly agreed to car shuttle me to and, at the end of my trip, from this place. Thanks my dear, I really appreciate it!

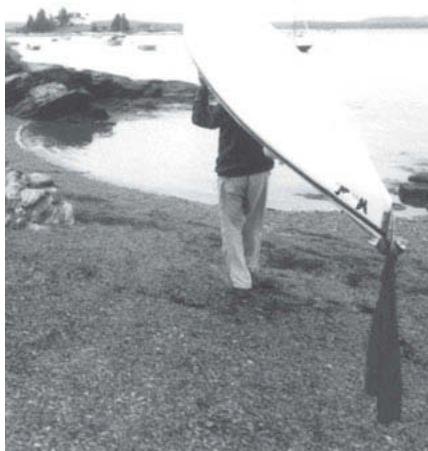
By the way, it is a very pleasant drive from my place in Orono to Bucksport, Blue Hill and Sedgewick, through boulder-strewn blueberry fields, reminding me of Robert McCloskey's book *Blueberries for Sal*, one of our kids' (and my) favorites, as well as the world depicted in his *One Morning in Maine* and *Time of Wonder*. Finally we drove across the tall, swoopy and extremely narrow Deer Isle suspension bridge onto the island. The trip had started.

Butter Island Archipelago

My first overnight was to be on Butter Island because I wanted to look around

July/August 2011

By Reinhard Zollitsch



Put-in near Pumpkin Island Light.

the many islands in that group in Penobscot Bay to the west of Deer Isle, but also to find out whether I could get a reservation by phone in advance, which was said to be impossible. I had no problem. "Which of the sites do you want?" the caretaker asked. "Which would you recommend?" I asked back. "In my opinion, Nubble Beach is the most beautiful campsite in the world, but you can have either one you want," was her answer. How can you beat that? I booked two nights at no cost whatsoever and couldn't wait to get there.

The drive to the put-in on July 26 was smooth; so was the put-in itself. There was nobody at the ramp so I could take my time setting up my boat with spray skirt, chart, compass and stopwatch (no, still no GPS), with radar reflector and wiggle stick with orange flag mounted on my rear deck, for enhanced visibility in all conditions in the often crowded areas I was to travel in. A quick mental check to make sure I had everything packed, a hug and a kiss, a wave with my paddle and I was off.



Author getting ready to go.

Little Pumpkin Island, guarding the NW entrance to Eggemoggin Reach, was an absolute delight and made me smile as I rounded the corner of Little Deer Isle. At that point I had to ready myself for the jump across to Pickering, to Bradbury and Butter Island eventually. Visibility was such that I could make out at least the first island and from there the next, so no problem. Waves were beginning to break but all seemed very regular and predictable, again, no problem. The

fact that the wind came more or less from the south, over my left bow, only meant I had to pull a bit harder, but the distances between those islands were mercifully short this first day, a total of only seven miles.

Right from the beginning, I had told myself that this trip was to be a see-and-enjoy type of trip, no mile gobbler from point A to B, as I mostly do, at a pace of 25 miles per day on average.

Butter Island finally appeared out of the dense haze, and Nubble Beach at the SE corner looked just right. There were camping spots up in the woods, but I preferred a more level spot right on the seawall, where I was still shaded by the tall trees behind me.



My view from Nubble Beach, Butter Island, towards Blue Hill.

A mid-morning coffee amidst the mist-covered island solitude, with nobody around, tasted real good, no noise other than the wind in the tree tops, the waves breaking on the long crescent pebble beach and a distant foghorn.

After a busy early summer, it seemed I finally had found some leisure to read, and even write notes in my trip log. After a five-week trans-Atlantic sail with five other crew and skipper (late April and all of May) on a classic German 60' racing yawl from Antigua/Caribbean to the Azores and on to Hamburg, Germany (see November issue, Ed.), it felt real good getting back in my little 17'2" Verlen Kruger Sea Wind sea canoe, alone and totally in control of my destiny.

Next day started sunny and the wind was light (5-10 knots), what more can one ask. I had planned a 12-mile day trip around most of the islands in this part of Penobscot Bay. I counted at least 15. I first headed north to see one of my favorite sailboat anchorages between the Barred Islands. From there I rounded Great and Little Spruce Islands, then headed SW to round far out Compass Island, swinging SE towards the northern tip of North Haven, where I rounded Oak and Burnt Islands. By then the tide was running out strong, and I had to crab my way sideways via Flint Island back to Butter. The wind had also freshened, up to 15 knots. Eagle Island and the Porcupines, I decided, had to wait for another trip. Tide and headwind together were simply too strong to make this extra loop fun.

The stretch from Butter to Eagle Island and across to Sheephead and Weir Island I had done before, on my MITA trip from Cape Porpoise to Machias in 2006. Weir Island, at the entrance to the Deer Isle Thorofare, was just as cute as ever. It is a perfect viewing point of all the boats entering or exiting this very popular shortcut from Penobscot to Blue Hill Bay and Mount Desert Island eventually. Again, I had the island all to myself, as well as the lovely low-tide beach in the SE corner.



View from Weir Island towards Deer Isle Thorofare/Stonington.



Merchant Row islands as seen from Kimball Island.

Busy Merchant Row

The wind sprang up early the next morning from the south, my direction of travel. My goal was to traverse Merchant Row, while checking out as many MITA islands as possible along the way. I hoped to end up on the NE corner of Kimball Island at the entrance of the Isle au Haut Thorofare. Well, I got there fine, but it took a little more brawn and was a little wetter than anticipated. At first I ducked behind Crotch Island, admiring the old cranes and derricks from the granite cutting days. The piles of granite cut-offs, imperfections, culls along this and the Green Island shore just a stone's throw to the east, were awesome and would have made great breakwaters in some harbor or helped towns in their shore erosion abatement programs.



Granite loading derricks on Crotch Island off Stonington.

Anyway, I then used Rock Island as my next wind break. The beach and grassy field at the north end looked like a promising MITA site. Again, it was unoccupied, and I did not see any other kayak out all day either. Where

Isle au Haut as seen from Doliver Island.

is everybody, I was wondering? This is the height of summer boating, and the weather is fine, for Maine standards even excellent.

Only the lobstermen were out, often speeding from one of their lobster buoys to the next, their mighty, throaty diesel engines roaring above the wind and wave noises. These are the big boys, mind you, not the little bay put-puts. Watch out, they are coming fast and mean business, lobstering that is, and (many of them) do not look kindly on pleasure boating, I hear. I felt good, though, making myself at least as visible as possible with my orange flag on a 6' wiggle stick and my high tech radar reflector, but more importantly, anticipating their moves and staying out of their way.

Potato, George Head and Steves Islands gave me some wind protection next, but then I had to slug it out to Harbor Island and from there to my next overnight spot on the NE corner of Kimball near Point Lookout, another well-set-up MITA site, and it too was unoccupied.

Swimming off its rock beach in the lee of the relatively high island was great, even though a tad on the cold side. But remember, these are Maine, not Florida, waters, but they are still distinctly warmer than what I swam in along Nova Scotia and Newfoundland shores. This is summer in Maine; this is as warm as it gets around Penobscot Bay, I had to tell myself.

Each time I land on a site, I press my SPOT satellite locator beacon, a tiny cell phone-sized affair, to let Nancy and family know about my safe arrival. They can then see my exact location from space via Google Earth on their computers. And at 5pm each afternoon, I make a short satellite phone call to Nancy, the high point of each day for me. It, of course, also is a necessary safety precaution for a person traveling alone on the ocean, as I see it.



Rounding Isle au Haut

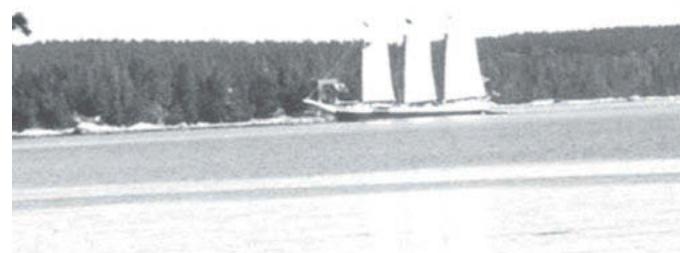
The marine weather report for the next day, which I can get on my VHF radio telephone, sounded OK. The wind was light (NW 5-10 knots), but there still were a lot of old swells coming in from the SSW, and I knew I had to tiptoe around the many rocks and ledges off the southern tip of Isle au Haut. I once hiked on the island with my son Mark. We got as far as Duck Harbor and saw the ocean roll in over the jagged outlying Haddock Ledges and other rocks. It looked awesome, but also very intimidating, and we both decided not to sail around the island, but prudently head back from the Thorofare, where we were anchored, to Stonington and Winter Harbor eventually.

Well, after a very rainy night I was off at the usual 7:20am. As I paddled down the Thorofare towards the light on Robinson Point, I knew that this was going to be the hardest and most exposed part of my trip. I had studied the chart very carefully and looked at all the off-lying rocks where swells could and would break; in other words, I was all eyes and ears, constantly checking my chart against the real scenery.

As anticipated, things got much dicier around Duck Harbor, and from there to the Western Ear, a small island almost attached to the SW corner of Isle au Haut, even more so. Studying the waves and the present state of tide carefully, I decided I could go inside of Western Ear and even inside of Eastern Ear, at the SE corner, right over the 5' bar. (Yes, the southern tip of Isle au Haut has two cute islands almost attached to the main island, like little ears, plus a few more very nasty breaking ledges in between.)

I was glad to have made it safely to the Eastern Ear, when I noticed a big lobster boat bearing down on me from the north at full throttle. We met right on the 5' bar, his wake mixing with the swells rolling in from the south, and I was dancing and throwing a few quick braces with my paddle to stay upright, a brief but very tense and sweaty situation, if you know what I mean.

Victory Chimes on Deer Isle Thorofare from Hell's Half Acre.



The rest of my rounding was a piece o' cake: going straight north in the lee of the tall island toward York Island. At its northern tip, just a tad to the NW, is the tiny barren island of Doliver, a rarely visited MITA site. I looked through the MITA log book and found out that I was the first camper here this year. The landing and later pushing off was a bit harder than usual; i.e., it necessitated carrying boat and gear over rocks, no smooth sand beach here, except at dead low tide.

The afternoon there got very hot as the sun came out. I found only one little pine tree on the island, but it was still too small to shed any shade for the tired paddler. So I crouched behind a granite rock wall on my Crazy Creek chair and whiled away the afternoon with some easy Clive Cussler reading, interrupted only by brief swims and cups of coffee and cocoa. (Don't sneer, even retired professors like to read Dirk Piff sea adventure stories.)

Hell's Half Acre and Many More Islands

I felt great having successfully circumnavigated formidable Isle au Haut. The rest of the trip was going to be frosting on the cake. Next morning I pushed off in a very good mood. The sun had also come out, and the sea was almost calm. I was looking for the most interesting passages through all those many islands. I touched on Burnt, went between Round and McGlathyery as well as between Coombs and Spruce, only to end up north of Devil on Hell's Half Acre. It is without a doubt the most popular island of the entire archipelago between Deer Isle and Isle au Haut. You find it a tad NNW of Devil Island or between Camp and Bold. (The name itself also helps attract would-be macho boaters to stop over here, and it is very easy to get ashore on the gently sloping granite shelf on the north side of the island.)

Approaching Hell's Half Acre from the north, I had already prepared my mind to accept scooting over to Russ or Buckle, if the two tent platform sites there were taken. But to my surprise, nobody was camping here, and nobody else came by all afternoon to unpack their gear on the other tent platform. I could hardly believe my luck, and that on a Sunday, July 31! Only a few tired day paddlers stopped briefly for a water/granola or "P-stop" before most likely returning to the sea kayak rental and campground in Webb Cove, across from here to the north on Deer Isle.

All afternoon all kinds of boats passed by my place to the north along the Deer Isle Thorofare, including the old three-masted schooner *Victory Chimes*, a significant sight in Maine waters. I still remember its old skipper Capt'n Guild ("Guild" pronounced as in "wild," he always said). What a guy! By

MITA site on Hell's Half Acre.



22 – *Messing About in Boats*, December 2011

sundown the bight between here and Camp Island was filled with 19 sailboats at anchor for the night, including the schooner *Steven Taber*. But nobody came ashore for a swim or beach play. Maybe the coffee, beer and food were too good on board. I couldn't tell, because I was not invited over. :-)

Since the weather was so great, I instead decided to go for an afternoon jaunt around a few more islands: Camp, Russ, Scott, Green, Potato, Coombs, Ram, Spruce and Devil, seven miles in one-and-a-half hours, neat, fast and easy in an empty boat.

Eggemoggin Reach in the Fog

After every great day there comes a pay-back. Thick fog greeted me the next morning, but my course was easy: from my place, past Bold and Grog Island to Buckmaster and WhitmOre Neck on Deer Isle, and finally across to Stinson Neck. By then I paddled in pea soup fog up north to "the other Sheep Island" off Stinson Neck (there also is a Sheep and Little Sheep off Buckmaster Neck) to Potato Island. I have to admit, though, that I missed "the little potato" on my first try. It just wasn't there! I shook my head, retraced my steps, changing my course a bit more to the north, and voila, there it was suddenly. However, at that point I did not like it anymore because I had missed it on my first attempt and was still castigating myself, AND it was still much too early in the day to pull out, AND I had to make sure I would make my take-out tomorrow. So I figured the farther I got today, the better for tomorrow, and I pushed on to the western corner of Campbell Island.

I found it fine, but also a lot of blow-downs, trees uprooted or broken off "by the fierce Atlantic storms," I read, when in fact most of the trees were beyond maturity and were ready to go and topple over anyway to make room for nature's process of rejuvenation, as I see it. It was a shame to see all those big trees "go to waste," but this was just nature doing its thing, was my final assessment.

I ended my trip up Eggemoggin Reach in the thick of fog the next morning. I hugged the Deer Isle shore, noticing that the almost black spruce-clad island shores had suddenly changed to a typical "lake front" dominated by deciduous trees like maple, oak, birch and beech. I was suddenly in a completely different world.

The Deer Isle bridge.



The farther I got up the Reach, the more the fog turned into haze, allowing me to see the top spans of the tall Deer Isle suspension bridge peek over the lower water bound fog layer. But the closer I got to the bridge, the better the visibility became.

I took some pictures of the bridge. Suspension bridges are so photogenic. One has to take pictures of them; everybody does. And after a few more miles, the vegetation on shore changed back to black spruce, the wind picked up and I saw three schooners with all sails set, including their top sails, nose their way out of Bucks Harbor towards the bridge. At that point Pumpkin Island Light came back into view, and just before it, on the very tip of Little Deer Isle, my designated take-out ramp, my VW Golf and my happily waving sweetheart Nancy, cheerful as ever.



Happy pick-up

Again, nobody else was there, no crowds and tension as at the usual boat launching ramps. I could unload my boat at my pace, carry my gear up to my car and swing the 65-pound boat overhead to get it onto the roof rack of my little VW Golf. I was very

glad Nancy did not bring our big van. Yes, I have to admit that swinging the boat onto my head like a clean-and-jerk weightlifter is getting harder for me with each passing year (72 right now). But I am confident I'll find a different way of getting it on top of the car when my legs begin to buckle in earnest.

Summary

A hug and a kiss and a quick bakery fresh spinach quiche in Blue Hill, and we were home in no time. My dog Willoughby, a big, powerful two-year-old male yellow Lab, was ecstatic to see me back, immediately asking for all the things we usually do each day: walk in the woods, canoe and swim in the river behind our house... and get lots of TLC as well as a few dog biscuit treats.

My trip of eight days covered about 80 leisurely miles, which comes to a paltry ten miles per day. But covering long distances was not the purpose of the trip, as I mentioned before. The most surprising revelation of my trip, however, was that I did not encounter any crowding on the MITA islands or even the entire water world surrounding Deer Isle and Isle au Haut, Maine's prime sea kayaking area. As a matter of fact, I had each overnight spot I stopped at all to myself. I also did not meet any other paddlers other than a few local boaters dawdling around Weir Island and a few day trippers briefly landing on Hell's Half Acre. I did not get a chance to speak to any of them. Either I was lucky finding solitude, or the ocean with its often harsh conditions was winnowing out the chaff from the grain, thus taking care of overcrowding.

So if any of you readers out there are planning to paddle around "The High Island," Isle au Haut, I would suggest you carefully prepare for it and get ready, physically and mentally. It is a very formidable, hard, big rock of an island, sticking way out into Penobscot Bay and is surrounded by lots of offshore ledges and pinnacle rocks where even old innocent looking swells could suddenly break, take you in their grip and send you through the wringer. Being in a "washing machine" with hard rocks below and a steep shore you can't climb out on, is no fun, folks, especially when you are alone.

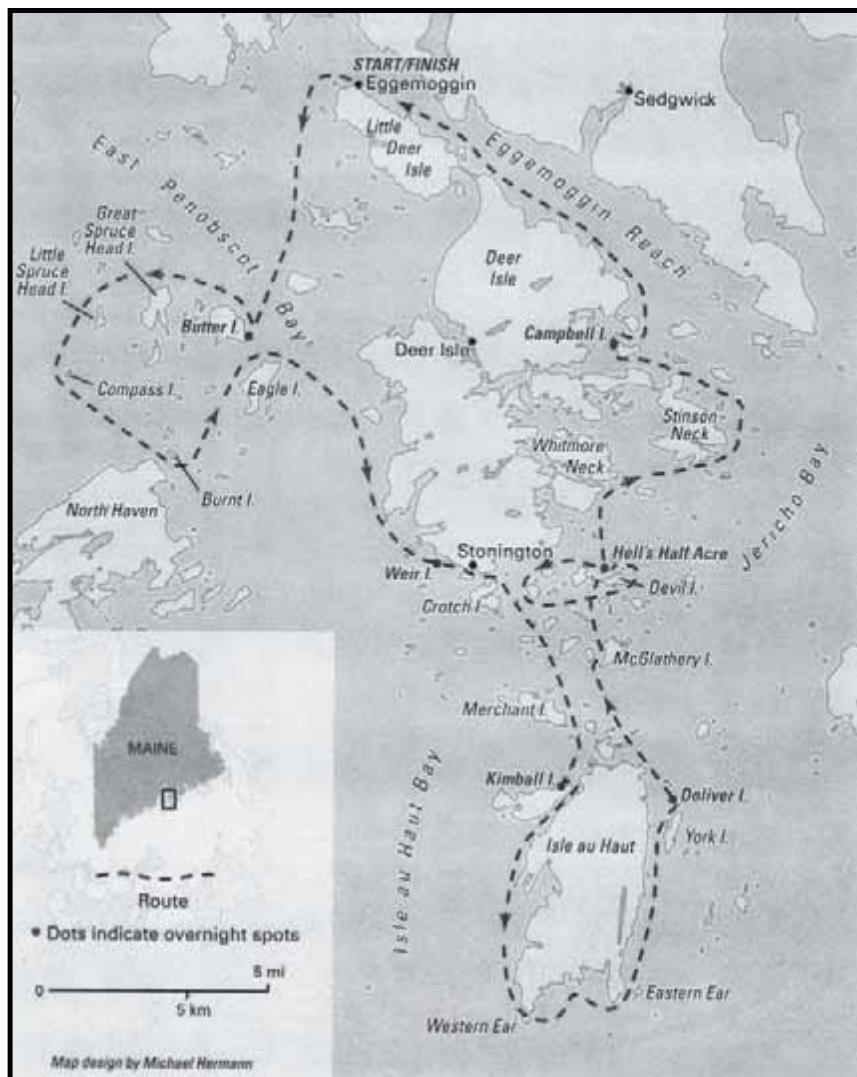
But for the same reason, both these islands are truly beautiful, bordering on the spectacular, and present a real challenge for the intermediate to expert paddler. Sorry, no beginners at the southern tip of Isle au Haut! Try Webb Cove to Hell's Half Acre instead. It sounds real tough, but is a cinch in halfway decent weather for any properly equipped person with basic skills and a good dose of determination and stamina. Unsure paddlers, whiners and complainers better stay off the ocean altogether. Sorry for the bluntness, but believe me, the Atlantic in Maine is harsh, cold, demanding and unforgiving. It can and will bite you if you do not watch out. But it can also present you with grand vistas and truly memorable experiences, like this trip through the island world of Deer Isle and Isle au Haut.

Enjoy and stay safe, Reinhard
reinhardgmaine.edu
www.ZollitschCanoeAdventures.com

Gear and Info

17'2" VerLen Kruger Sea Wind sea canoe with spray skirt and rudder, Kevlar, 65lbs (www.krugercanoes.com).

10-oz carbon fiber bent shaft canoe racing paddle by Zaveral (www.zre.com) 4lbs.



Luneberg Lensatic, passive radar reflector from West Marine (stern mounted).

6' bicycle wiggle stick with orange flag (stern mounted).

VHF radio telephone for weather reports and ship-to-ship/marina/locks.

Iridium satellite phone (used for outgoing calls only: daily safety check-in with Nancy).

SPOT satellite locator beacon (to my computer at home and some family members).

Regular camping gear with small propane stove; all food from home; two 2.5gal. water tanks/bags by Dromedary.

NOAA charts for Penobscot and Blue Hill Bay areas.

Ritchie compass and stopwatch.

Maine Island Trail 2011 Guide, Maine Island Trail Association (www.mita.org), 58 Fore Street, Suite 30-3, Portland, ME 04101.

Bill Caldwell: *Islands of Maine*, Guy Gannett Publ. Co., Portland, Maine, 1981.

Roger Duncan: *Coastal Maine, A Maritime History*. Norton & Co, 1992.

Christina Tree & Nancy English: *Maine Coast & Islands*. The Countryman Press, Woodstock, VT, 2011.

Robert McCloskey: *Blueberries for Sal, One Morning in Maine, Time of Wonder*. Fun reading (supply your own! mine was a Dirk Pitt sea adventure story by Clive Cussler).

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Chicago was hit with a July set of storms rendering 8+” of rainwater at O’Hare Field which drained downstream into the Salt Creek, Des Plaines and DuPage Rivers.

We’d been waiting for the crest to lower from 8’ to about 3’ on Salt Creek for safer fast water paddling. That day finally came and, after a Doppler radar check, we headed for the creek. The weather was forecast to be overcast 70 degrees with a 30% chance of rain.

My son Mike brought his new wooden Take-A-Part 13’ kayak. I chose my old favorite 9’ homemade wooden kayak. I had paddled the same stretch last year on similar fast water using my other 13’ Take-A-Part kayak and had trouble missing some snags, boulders and some strainers. It lacks “rocker” needed for those quick turns. My little 9-footer turns on a dime and might be better dodging those obstacles. Mike built his last winter and built lots of “rocker” into his hull at my suggestion. Today was test day. Would his steer better around obstacles than mine did last summer? Would my little 9-footer do better than my 13-footer did last summer?

After scouting several bridges for log jams, we put in at Bemis Woods Forest Preserve in Salt Creek, well below the upstream 6’ Fullersburg Dam. The high water of the last several days had left slimy black mud covering the ground around the launch site. The whole creek and woods smelled of that muck.

I donned my short 12” rubber boots and put my sneakers in the kayak for later use. Smart move. The sky being overcast, I was wearing my regular eyeglasses and forgot I left my sunglasses in the van. Dumb move. I realized they were missing when the sun peeked out toward the end of the paddle. Our wallets and cell phones were placed into sealed plastic bags and stuffed inside our shirts.

I shoved off first into the 3-6mph current and quickly found our first of many log jams in this twisting creek. It took some fancy paddling, back paddling, head ducking and zig-zagging to thread our way through. That was just a warmup.

It was refreshing to be paddling all downstream instead of upstream as I usually do. Mike’s longer kayak was not easy to handle getting through several more log jams that followed. Some of the shoreline and midstream major snags created much swirling water and turbulence and control was challenging for both of us. Every turn presented hazards and we were constantly ducking low hanging branches. It was not a dull paddle, sometimes we were steering through a dimly lit tunnel of trees.

In one or two straight stretches when we could rest a bit, we both noticed that the woods and creek were eerily quiet, one had to be there to experience the absolute stillness we felt. The only sounds were our voices breaking the silence. The cheerful chatter of song birds was missing. The scampering of squirrels as well as their warning calls were missing. Only the occasional bubbling of water around snags could be heard.

Destruction was everywhere. Piles of flood ravaged tree parts were jammed 6’-8’ high at creek bends and on log jams. Twisted limbs, snapped branches, dead swamp grass, plywood, 2”x4”s, contractors’ plastic and the ever present plastic bottles decorated these piles. It was a scene I recognized from a year ago when I paddled solo through these same

High Water Paddle on the Lower Salt Creek

By Bob McAuley



The 9' kayak I used on the high water run.

waters. We figured that all the birds and animals had abandoned the scene and moved to higher ground and the better food supply. The major flood had covered all the low lying fields and woods with that slimy, smelly black muck.

Strangely, there was only a great blue heron that kept us company. In a way it was a bit spooky. When we drew too close to him he would launch himself into the air without a sound. Usually a heron will give a startled squawking sound. This one didn’t. He flew just a little way ahead of us as though leading us toward destruction?? It reminded me of Edgar Allen Poe’s *Raven*.

Although it was overcast, it grew darker shortly after we launched and we were greeted by a series of close thunder claps. Was that heron a bad omen? There was a 30% chance of rain but we remained dry and not “lightning struck.” The nearby storm crossed north of O’Hare Field and dumped 4” inches on those unlucky folks up there.

The strainers and snags kept us busy trying to avoid them and their tricky turbulence. Finally we stopped for a breather in a backwater and snacked, but still in our kayaks. Staying in the kayaks, though cramped, was better than trying to climb out on those slippery, muck covered banks. At every log jam we carefully and luckily found a way through, so we stayed clean and dry, almost. “Almost” because, crossing over a low rock dam, the water just percolates up into 1’ or 2’ waves. One broke over my bow and did land a gallon of water in the cockpit. No problem. It was sponge time. Seconds later Mike banged into an underwater boulder. That woke him up! Is that part of breaking in a new kayak?

Our final challenge came at those dreaded old stone sentinel bridge abutments spanning the creek. They were well log jammed! At first sight, this log jam covered the entire 30-yard wide creek at this point. I groaned at the thought of a portage. Luckily I spotted on the far left bank what looked like a possible opening. After paddling over to the bank, we were able to squeeze between the muddy bank and under a huge downed tree limb. By pushing on the creek bank and pulling on the tree limb we were able to keep paddling downstream to the last rapids. I remembered when I paddled by here last year, there was only a minor log jam but I still almost hit that stone abutment.



The limestone old bridge support that collects logs after every flooding, here free of them earlier this year

We ran two more dams and the rocky rapids where the channel narrows down to maybe 15’ and really speeds up. That made for some more quick paddling.

I was tired when I spotted the Addison creek junction and the take-out at 17th Avenue bridge. Landing on the muck covered banks made for a balancing and dance act. We then had to bushwhack up a 45° steep 30’ high bank dragging our kayaks. Mike’s was a little lighter because we were able to “take it apart.” Mike proved his muscular best by toting those kayaks over the 3’ guard rail and onto the highway bridge. The sun had finally come out and helped us work up a sweat climbing that creek bank.

Looking back, the paddle was our first “together” on that fast creek water. Mike did a good job in his boat and in the water. Me, I survived!! Trip time: roughly one hour 50 minutes for 8 miles.

My 9-footer did better than my 13-footer but the 9-footer was constantly hunting and I had to correct it much of the time. Mike’s 13-footer was clumsy around the log jams. His turned and tracked well in the fast water.

I wanted to paddle the creek again after a month or so. Maybe Mother Nature would have reclaimed the woods again and would bring the life sounds of the birds and animals back to the woods. Maybe some cleansing rains will have washed off that muck covered understory and brought back the insects for bird food. Once the banks dry up, even the deer will be back to drink without sliding down and getting stuck, as I’ve witnessed in the past.

However, paddling during lower water presents portaging and/or lining problems that I just can’t handle anymore. The wooden kayaks would definitely get beat up on the hundreds of rocks just waiting to do damage. Maybe I’ll have to bring along another helper. It was a decided change from the calmer waters we usually paddle. We’re lucky to have such Mother Nature’s treat so nearby for our paddling pleasure..

It was fun Keep Paddlin’,

One week later...

In sharp contrast to the above story, one week later on a sunny morning found me solo on the calmer Salt Creek waters above the dam. The morning temp was already 80° and due to hit 90°s again.

As I paddled my 13’ Take-A-Part kayak north upstream, the water level was only a foot above normal but it was peaceful. I welcomed the water rippling breezes on this sultry early morning. The kingfisher greeted me with his victory call after having snapped up

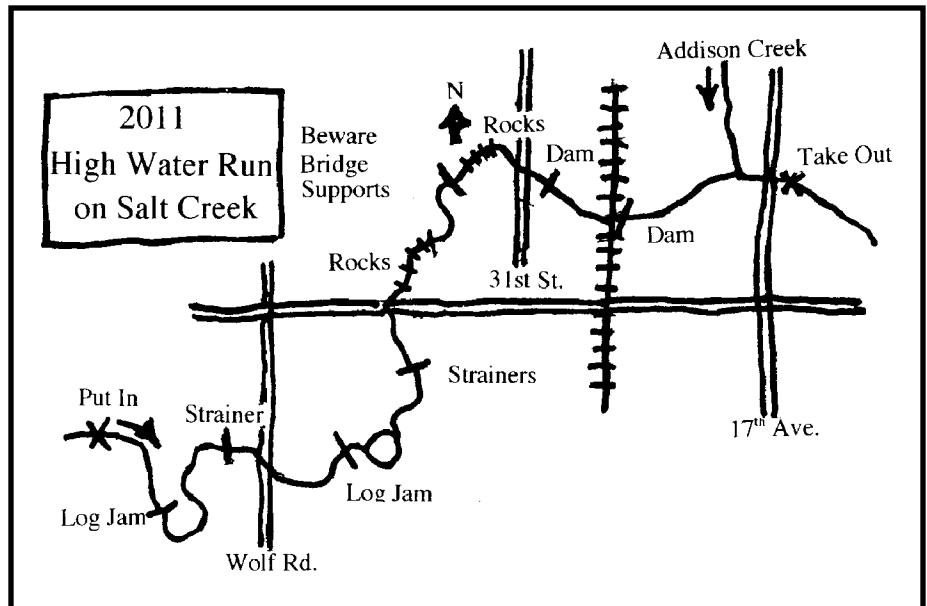
a hapless minnow. Toward the back of the wide mud flat stood the white egret ever on the watch for his breakfast.

I detoured around them so as not to disturb their fishing and labored upstream to the pedestrian bridge. I found it 95% log jammed again, caused by that flood of two weeks ago. I found an opening and squeaked through by pulling branches and pushing off on a jammed log. Tired, I rested in the shoreline shadows and watered down. The next stretch would be in the broiling sun.

My goal for the morning was to make it to that downed cottonwood and see if it was still tethered to the bank where I had last seen it. Had the latest storm moved it? Would it be blocking the creek? Ten minutes later, when I entered the left hand channel next to the island, brought another surprise. A storm toppled tree now blocked the entire channel. It was clear two weeks ago.

Before turning around, I spotted a white object floating on the water. Reaching it, I was pleasantly surprised to receive a nice "Bird's Calling Card." A white Egret feather plume was my reward!

Tired and hot, I decided to head back. It would require too much hard paddling to fight the tougher current on the right side of the island on this particular hot morning. The whereabouts of that cottonwood will have



to remain a mystery until the weather cools down. The float downstream was helped with that "Irishman's Wind at the Back."

In contrast to last week's "fast paddle below the dam," the creek and woods had

come back to life with the sounds of birds and animals everywhere. Both the kingfisher and egret flew by me near the take-out seemingly to bid me "Good Day" and it was!

Keep Paddlin' ...



Who Knew?

People are always full of surprises and our rather intense customer Norman N. was no exception. He owned a rather beat up old wooden Victory 21 which he sailed on weekends in need of relaxation. While he worked at a steady job, his nights were spent running machinery in his apartment, hoping to invent a new kind of fabric. He longed to make a fortune with his discovery but was convinced that "someone" would steal his formula and deny him his fortune.

One weekend at Grant's he carried a large flat package under his arm and approached me as I painted the exterior shed doors. When I asked him what was up, he replied by saying, "I invented a new little portable rowboat, something to take with me on weekends. This way I can sail wherever I want with no dinghy trailing, I can drop anchor wherever, row ashore and be totally independent. I'll assemble it on the float, c'mon down and I'll give you a demonstration."

Intrigued, I went to the float and watched him unwrap and assemble his packaged invention. It was a large piece of fiberglass which folded up to form topsides and transom with thin cables secured under the one and only middle seat holding the boat together. From the float, he proceeded to get aboard his box-shaped little boat (with precious little freeboard), pop in wee oar locks and had just gotten seated when the cables under his seat unhooked which caused the topsides to collapse!

Looking startled, Norman was about to sink in the water, briefly sitting upright in his street clothes, on a slab of fiberglass, little oars still in hand! I am embarrassed to say that I stood laughing in amusement as Norman grabbed his postage stamp of a boat, with its cute little mini oars, before all floated away and he swam for the float. I gave him a hand as, totally drenched, he ascended the dock. Walking in water-filled shoes, Norman and I laid out his money to sun dry on the decking when he said, "I guess I'll have to work on this."

Update: When Norman revisited us years later, he had become very wealthy, owned a large property in Vermont and had a lovely wife. He said he had a big sailboat, too. No mention of a dinghy!



And then there was the couple to whom we referred as the "Klepper Couple." The first year they came to Grants they arrived with their new Klepper in a sack atop their Volks, took a locker, paid their dues and left. The following year they took their Klepper to the porch where, with stopwatch in hand, they timed themselves as they assembled their kayak. They recorded their time, dismantled their boat, put it back in its kit and stored it in the locker. We never saw them

My City Island Days

Part 7

Grant's Boat Club Some of Our Customers

By Fay Jordae

again until the following spring when they repeated the timed process. Each year he would say, "We're getting faster and faster." For five years the "Klepper Couple" came to the Club, repeated this process and never once put the boat in the water! Odd, right?

Everybody Knows an Al

Al was one of those unforgettable customers who gave us the chuckles. One day as I was sweeping the porch, Al comes running down the dock yelling, "Fay, Fay, call an ambulance." He is holding both arms upright and blood is streaming down one arm.

"C'mon over Al 'n sit on the steps." I turned on the hose and waited for a panting, frightened Al to sit down as the cold water hit his hand. As soon as the blood cleared away we could see a small flesh cut in between his fingers that was now oozing a wee bit of blood.

"OK Al, you're good to go."

A few weeks later I saw the Coast Guard towing Al's boat, sans his motor. I went down to the float and asked Al what happened to his motor?

"You'll never believe this but it fell off the transom. Fay can I borrow a grappling hook?" When asked where it fell overboard, he said that the engine slipped off "some-where on the other side of Hart Island."

"That's most of Long Island Sound, Al."

By far the funniest experience was the one he had that caused him to walk back to the boat yard from the other side of City Island, from near the bridge.

"Where's your boat Al?"

Reply, "I was on the other side of the Island when the motor got stuck in one position and the boat wouldn't stop turning round and round when eventually I fell overboard and the boat kept charging after me. Finally I swam to shore and walked back to the club."

But that mental picture of Al trying to swim away from his boat as it circled after him again and again, wickedly tickled my brain. Instead of Al running his boat, it's as though the boat dumped, then chased him. Some people shouldn't own boats!

Charlie

Some people are suited to physical challenges like sailing, and enjoy it, others, like Charlie, are ill-suited to the sport, and worst of all, seem totally unaware of this little detail.

Charlie mustered out of the Navy after WWII, bought a decked sailing canoe, joined the fleet of active sailors at City Island Canoe and Yacht Club and began sanding and fine-tuning his boat. He had much work to do on his hull before considering a sail. He gave everyone the impression that he was a seasoned sailor and appeared to feel that the necessary work on his new acquisition was a great annoyance as he wanted to be on the water as soon as possible. Finally, the launching day arrived. It so happened that I left the

Club about an hour before his trial run, having rowed myself home to my Dad's boat in Eastchester Bay. I was sitting astern enjoying a family conversation when I noticed that Charlie was not only afloat, but he was leaving the boat club for his maiden sail.

Many businesses dot the northwestern shore of City Island and the harbor in that area has always been tight and crowded. It was about 6pm, just in time for an evening southerly gusting puffy winds. Charlie was unable to thread his way through the congested harbor without hitting a series of boats, either with his bow, his extended board or his stern. Finally, when he tried to come about he capsized not too far from my dad's boat! He righted the boat and because he didn't release the sheets and the puffs had intensified, he flipped over, again, again and again!

At this point I got into our boat and rowed over to Charlie who was thrashing about in the water, sans a life jacket. I grabbed his stay and gently pulled the aluminum mast (which was filling with water) out of the Bay and said, "Charlie, release the sheets or you will continue to capsize!" He did not seem to hear me. Finally on the third try, with the weighted mast full of water and becoming more difficult to raise, I yelled at a petrified, almost hysterical man, "CHARLIE, LOOK AT ME, I AM NOT RELEASING THIS MAST 'TIL YOU OPEN THOSE CLEATS!"

Finally, he achieved some success. He righted his boat, set his sails for a broad reach, pointed toward shore and with his sails fluttering all the way, crashed into more boats on his way in to the Club. He got off at the float, abandoned his rigged boat on the spot and was never seen again!

Stella and Charlie

Stella and Charlie owned a beautiful Old Town canoe at Grant's, which they paddled every weekend with the help of their son Daniel. As severely crippled adults both suffering the ravages of childhood polio, they met, married, had a son, drove a mechanically altered car and owned their beloved green canoe.

They were religious canoeists. Every weekend their teenaged son carried his mother down the ramp, across the beach, placed her in their canoe and when all three were settled in their seats, they took off. Everyone admired them for their courage but worried about their safety, for if the boat should swamp or capsize, despite their powerful arm muscles, Stella and Charlie were totally helpless in the water.

Popular customers, they always sat in a special corner of the boatyard known as 'Stellas's' corner. Our customers were concerned for Stella, a 4'10" serious, but very dear woman, when she told us that she was being sued for harassment by a neighbor in her building. Everyone wanted to know why? It seems that a woman named Sylvia delighted in picking on Stella in the elevator. One day, when she was cornered in the elevator, alone and feeling helpless, Sylvia bullied her again and Stella said, "I leaned on the back wall of the elevator, picked up my crutch and clobbered that woman over her head and now she is suing me!"

Tickled by her story, feeling that justice had to be done, everyone at the Club asked the

couple for a weekly update, especially since Stella was so frightened by the court summons. Eventually her case was adjudicated.

According to Stella: "We went to court and the judge read the charges against me, then he asked Sylvia and me to approach the bench. I was surprised when the judge asked me how tall I was, with that he turned to my neighbor and leaning over his bench table to closely face Sylvia and in an outraged voice said, 'You're going to ask me to believe that this tiny, middle-aged, crippled woman attacked you in the elevator! Look at her! Don't you see her standing there, supported by crutches, with those long steel braces on her legs, don't you realize how helpless she is?' Red-faced, His Honor banged down his gavel and said case dismissed!"

I was delighted for Stella, as was everyone else, and told her so but was surprised by her reaction.

"I think I was wrong to hit that woman, Fay, but the judge never even asked me what happened!"

Surprised by her lack of joy and relief at the outcome, I asked her what she would have said to His Honor had he questioned her, and she said, "I would have told him the truth, that I did hit her with my crutch." With that, her son Danny arrived, picked her up and whisked her off to their canoe. It seems that it wasn't only her arm muscles that were powerful! Case closed!

Timothy Fitzgerald and the Currach

A youthful Timothy Fitzgerald presented himself to my husband Frank and asked him if Grant's Boat Club could accommodate his boat.

"What kind of boat do you have?"

Slightly rolling his 'r's and with a thick Irish accent he replied, "I have a currach."

Frank explained that we couldn't rack a boat that size but we could moor it in the anchorage off the Club.

When Tim finally brought his boat to the yard, he stored it on our upland for a few days while he painted it blue. All of our members were curious to see this 'Irish' boat. The hull was full of ribs with canvas stretched over the frame, and tar was applied to the exterior canvas to keep it watertight. Its shape caused the onlookers to re-name it the "banana boat". The bow and square stern sat high in the water and gave the boat a distinct banana shape, hence the nickname.

The long oars were odd, the ends that dipped into the water had no blades, instead they were extensions of the shafts. There were no oarlocks as we knew them, holes in the shafts fit over dowels protruding from the gunwales. They worked just fine.

The square stern accommodated a motor that sat nicely on the transom. The boat was surprisingly easy to row; it sliced its way through the water, propelled by its long strange oars. We could not row the currach as though it was a rowboat, if we held the oars improperly we would bash our hands together.

In 1976, during Operation Sail, Timothy, a fiercely devout Irishman, erected a mast as he planned to sail the currach into New York Harbor for the event. He showed up at the Club with a can of red spray paint. We watched as he spray painted the sail red in remembrance of Bobby Sands, who was an imprisoned IRA Irishman fighting to free

Ireland from any British influence. When the spraying job was done, Timothy set sail for New York Harbor.

That night, as we watched TV, we saw the beautiful Tall Ships in New York Harbor. Suddenly a TV camera scanning the horizon stopped and zoomed in on a small sailboat. There, among the Tall Ships, was Timothy Fitzgerald sailing his little blue currach renamed *The Spirit of Bobby Sands!* There was something touching about that.

The Sunfish

Doctor Brenda was a young professional in training at Jacobi Hospital when she bought a Sunfish, became one of our customers and kept her boat at our Grant's Boat Club on City Island. One particular sunny summer day, dark haired Brenda showed up at the Club, still wearing her hospital greenies carrying a six pack of Ballantine beer, with two young resident doctors in tow. "Hey Fay, how about going out with us for a sail?"

I said, "yes!" right away especially as it was blowing gale winds and we would surely have a wonderful adventure.

The Sunfish was a small sailboat with barely enough room for its captain, so we were really pushing it with four, admittedly slim, adults. Perhaps the single mast carries approximately 75sf of sail, which proved to be plenty for the wind that day.

It took Brenda minutes to single handedly rig up and prepare for a beach take-off, still wearing her greenies. Once we got out about 800' into the harbor, we were exposed to stronger SE wind puffs and cresting seas. I sat on the starboard side of the boat, while Brenda clutched the tiller with one hand and slugged down her Ballantine with the other. She was confident and oblivious to the weather.

Her white-knuckled youthful guests sat opposite me, decked out for a sail, wearing their stringed tied down soft safari hats, life jackets, long shorts, nifty new top-siders and were having nothing to do with Brenda's offer of a beer. They sat rigidly and never spoke. Clearly they were scared in that heavily weighed down little Sunfish, which lost its freeboard and was beginning to torpedo its way thru the cresting seas, making all of us sopping wet. It was hilarious!

I never liked a Sunfish, thought they were awful boats upon which anyone could possibly learn the rudiments of sailing. They slipped off the wind, never held a tack, weren't the best at coming about and basically didn't seriously obey any rules of sailing, but that day, in a gale, we were having a blast on that little white and red boat. It felt like we were on a plank with a sail, spearing our way through the waves.

The 50' Harbor Police boat berthed their black launch on Hart Island, just opposite Grants Boat Club and had previously been summoned to Grants and other clubs for assistance during emergency situations; sometimes they tied up alongside our 40' float to hop ashore for sandwiches. But on that day, we were the only boat sailing in the harbor, so we attracted their attention almost immediately and they came across the short span of water, cornered us right off Rat Island, circled around and, with megaphone in hand, policeman and City Islander D. Parfit, yelled, "C'mon, Fay, it's blowing a gale out here! Get back to shore! Thus ended the only good sail that miserable little boat ever gave me!"

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The International Scene

According to the International Transport Workers' Federation, morale of seafarers is at an all-time low due to: piracy, fatigue, denial of shore leave, visa problems, the ISPS (International Ship and Port Facility Security Code) and lack of communication facilities while on board. Add the criminalization of seafarers. (A tank truck driver can have an accident that spills thousands of gallons of oil without the law stepping in, but let a vessel create an oily sheen and it's crime time.)

The Southern Africa country of Mozambique has the world's last major untapped coal reserves but needs heavy investments to get coal to a port for export. The Brazilian mining company Vale has been making such investments and the first export shipment, 35,000 tonnes of thermal coal for Lebanon, recently left on the bulker *Orion Express*.

In its relentless pursuit of a cleaner environment, California passed a law requiring vessels to switch from heavy oil fuels to fuels with less than 1.5% percent sulphur as they approach the state but there has been a 100% increase in engine failures and blackouts since the law went into effect in July, 2009.

Thin Places and Hard Knocks

Ships ran aground: A British report revealed details why the feeder container ship *K-Wave* ran aground at full speed 13 miles east of Malaga last February while the bridge was unmanned. The vessel's Voyage Data Recorder preserved sounds of a very boozy party on the bridge involving many "toasts" and most of the ship's officers. The festivities broke up after several hours when the second officer announced he needed to carry out his duties as officer of the watch. But he left the bridge at some time in the next four hours, the course was changed and the ship ultimately and gently ran aground. A local fishing vessel notified the Spanish coast guard that the ship appeared to be aground and about the same time the chief mate found the bridge was unmanned. Efforts by the master to free the ship were unsuccessful. Interestingly, the report noted that the course change was due to a deliberate manipulation of the autopilot controls.

On the Columbia River, an electrical failure put the vehicle carrier *Luminous Ace* ashore somewhere between Portland and Astoria. No leaks, not much excitement, just the non-routine deployment of a precautionary anchor and the tedious wait for high tide and some tugs.

On the Westerschelde, the largest channel leading to Antwerp, the container ship *MSC Luciana* ran up on a sandbank near the Belgian border. One observer commented, "The ship is well and truly stuck."

Ships collided or allided: At Hamburg, the container ship *Charlotta* ran into the stern of the cargo ship *Hanse Confidence* at high speed. The *Hanse Confidence* suffered a hull crack that threatened for a time to sink her but fire brigade pumps barely kept her afloat.

Near Singapore, the Singapore flagged cargo vessel *Xetha Bhum* collided with the Vietnam flagged tanker *Dainam*. The tanker ended up in a drydock while the other vessel anchored with severe damage to its portside.

Off Mangalore in India, the fishing vessel *Ocean Fisher-2* hit a sunken ship and capsized. The skipper was saved but six others went missing.

At 53°12'15" north and 5°18'19" west (that's near Wicklow Harbor, Ireland) the crude oil tanker *Ocean Lady* hit the fishing

Beyond the Horizon

By Hugh Ware

vessel *Bridget Carmel* in the early morning hours. The FV suffered damage to its topside and derrick.

In Sweden at Tjorn in the Bohusian archipelago, some bunker oil spilled after the bulker *Golden Trader* collided with the Belgian trawler *Vidar*.

Off Pulau Tioman in Malaysia, the smallish chemical tanker *Cendanawati* sank after being in a collision with the smallish asphalt tanker *Cosmic*. One master lost his ship and suffered head and neck injuries.

In the Kiel Canal in Germany near the Brunsbuttel locks, the tanker *John Essberger* collided with the German dredger *Wilhelm Krüger*. The dredger suffered severe water ingress and needed a prompt pump out.

Ships capsized: Ordinarily, pulling a 3,000-ton Coast Guard training ship off a pier is routine work for two tugs, even when waves are three metres high and the wind is blowing ten metres per second. But the 19-ton tug *Kita Maru No. 12* capsized while undocking the *Miura* at Wajima Port in Japan and both tug men died.

Fire and explosion took a toll: Off Jakarta, the FSO (Floating Storage and Offloading) vessel *Lentera Bangsa* caught fire and one man was missing. The converted tanker stored crude oil from the Widuri field of Java Sea until shuttle tankers could take the oil ashore to be processed. The damaged FSO was towed away to be repaired and the product tanker *Galunggung* took its place so production could resume.

Humans died or were injured: At a Chittagong shipbreaking yard in Bangladesh, a worker died from being struck by a falling steel panel after being taken to a hospital.

In the Philippines at Subic, at least five workers were killed and eight seriously injured when a 42-ton ramp collapsed. It had provided access to the British flagged vehicle carrier *Tombarr*, which was undergoing repairs.

Humans were rescued: In Alaska, a Coast Guard chopper flew 345 miles to Sand Point, refueled and headed out to the tanker *Murray Star* more than 500 miles southwest of Kodiak. There, the helicopter hoisted an unconscious 47-year-old man and flew back to Sand Point.

Other casualties and oddities: At Darwin, a container crane was seriously damaged by another crane in strong winds last January. Three months after repairs were completed, the repaired crane smashed into a crawler crane, twanging its cables with considerable ill effect but hurting no one.

Elsewhere in Australia, Port Kembla was down to one unrestricted marine pilot and two restricted pilots due to sickness, injury and annual leave. As a result, there was a stretch when no vessels were alongside and six others waited at anchor.

In northwestern Germany on the Hunte River, the self-propelled barge *Janine* had steering problems at Neuenhunfort and ended up with its bow on one bank and its stern on the other bank. When the tide went out, the ship broke in half and dumped its cargo of 1,100 tons of ore.

Gray Fleets

The US Navy failed to note what other US federal agencies were approving and now the service must accommodate encroachment by commercial wind turbines into the 47,000 acres of air space of its Boardman Bombing Range in Oregon.

Anybody viewing the flight deck of an aircraft carrier must wonder at its vastness. It looks big enough to house a major sports event. And such will happen in November when the basketball teams of North Carolina and Michigan State compete in a purpose-built, 7,000-person stadium on the carrier *USS Carl Vinson*, all at no cost to the government.

Iran will respond to the global arrogance of the forces of imperialism by having a strong naval presence near the US sea borders, probably in the Gulf of Mexico. So announced a top Iranian naval officer. But how this would be done has fascinated many. Iran has three inactive destroyers and its several light frigates have a maximum range 5,000nm, so refueling for a return voyage would be a problem, a problem possibly solved by a cooperative Venezuela. By the way, US officials did not anticipate any port visits by the Iranians.

France withdrew its only aircraft carrier, the *Charles de Gaulle*, from Libyan operations so the ship could start planned autumn maintenance. Once it enters maintenance, neither Britain nor France will have an operational aircraft carrier.

The Royal Malaysian Navy's fast attack craft *KD Pari* nearly sank when one of its shafts pulled out. Fast work got the warship near a jetty, where it did sink. It was soon raised with the use of lifting bags. And the same navy has been a major contributor to the anti-piracy efforts by acquiring a small container ship, the *Bunga Mas 5*, and converting it into an inexpensive naval auxiliary. Recently, this impromptu warship drove off skiffs approaching the tanker *Eagle Stealth* in the Strait of Bab-al-Manden.

The firefighting vessel *PGK-638*, a minor member of Russia's Caspian navy, collided with the Russian tanker *Grigory Bugrov* in the Volga-Caspian canal. The tanker received a large hole above its waterline but both vessels stayed afloat.

White Fleets

The Hurtigruten is the nonstop stream of about ten semi-cruise ships that serve the remote communities along the coast of Norway. Its *Nordlys* was about to arrive at Alesund when fire broke in the engine spaces, a fire that killed two and severely burned another two. The ship limped into Alesund, where its 262 passengers disembarked and shore-based fire services boarded for what proved to be a difficult fight. At one point, the ship took on a severe list but was finally stabilized to where cars and passenger luggage could be unloaded.

A few days later, fleet mate *Nordnorge* allided with the pier at Båtsfjord. A hole was punched in the ferry's hull well above the waterline. The municipality apologized for defects in equipment that let it jut several feet from the pier.

On the Danube, the river cruise ship *Prima donna* ran aground at low speed and all 150 passengers were evacuated to a nearby hotel.

Those That Go Back and Forth

A member of the British team in the Rugby World Cup took it particularly hard

that his team was eliminated in the quarter finals by a French team that had lost two straight times. Perhaps to cool off, he jumped off a ferry in Auckland Harbour and swam to shore. Police warned him about his "disorderly behaviour" and the Rugby Football Union fined him £3,000 (\$4,660). He agreed that "it was a silly thing" before flying back to the UK.

In the Likoni Channel at Mombasa, the 1,550-passenger ferry *Kwale* collided with the freighter *Sea Wind* and then narrowly missed another vessel. Minor injuries to some passengers and the ships, and the ferry was withdrawn from service.

In the Philippines, after the *Weesam Express 6* had engine problems, the Coast Guard removed all crew and passengers, then about three hours later, the local Coast Guard received the Maritime Industry Authority's suspension order stopping operation of the company's five vessels because the *Weesam Express 8* ran aground earlier in the month, an accident that left 208 passengers stranded for some time. (Its captain blamed a non-operational lighthouse.)

In Indonesia in eastern Java on the Barito River, the ro-ro/pax ferry *Marine Nusantara* collided with the tug *Pualuat Tiga 330/22* and that killed at least 3 of the 443 passengers and injured another 113 people. (Indonesia has the greatest number of tugs in the world, seconded by the US.) Elsewhere in the same country, fire broke out on the docked ferry *Kirana IX* at Surabaya and a resulting panic killed at least 8 people and injured scores more. The fire was in a truck loaded with onions and, although badly scorched, it remained drivable.

Residents on Coochiemudlo Island, a small island near Brisbane in Queensland, Australia, depend on barges to carry vehicles back and forth. Last month, both the *Sirenia* and *Megamia* failed seaworthiness tests and a smaller barge, the *Kooringai Trader*, was hurriedly brought in to provide interim daytime service. "Everything that could go wrong has. When it rain, it pours and I can tell you it's been bucketing down," explained the ferry company spokeswoman.

Also near Brisbane, the ferry *Jumpipin* ran upon a sand bar near Garden Island and it took about two hours to transfer 98 passengers onto another ferry for the remainder of their trip to the Redland Bay mainland. (The ferry's name may be a misprint as a Google search failed to bring it up. But jumpipin is a word of aboriginal origin that refers to the sweetened roots of the wynnnum (breadfruit) tree or possibly the pandanus tree.)

Legal Matters

Malaysian authorities spotted the small product tanker *Yong An* anchored illegally in Malaysian waters. Compounding that illegality, the vessel was flying the Malaysian flag upside down. The master could face up to two years in prison if it can be proven that he deliberately flew the flag that way. (The Malaysian flag is remarkably similar to the US flag and has an unmistakable "up" side.)

The owners and operators of the containership *Cosco Busan* that rammed a pier of the San Francisco Oakland Bridge in 2007 and dumped much oil have agreed to a civil settlement. They will pay \$44.4 million, \$18.8 million of which is for lost human uses of the shoreline and bay.

Four Somalis were sentenced to life in a US prison for their involvement in the

hijacking of the sail yacht *Quest* in the Indian Ocean. The four Americans on the *Quest* were killed during the hijacking.

Nature

On the face of it, the news report simply stated that the fishing vessel *Antonio 23* was overwhelmed by waves and sank while at the Payaw Artificial Reef in the West Philippine Sea and 3 fishermen were saved by the tanker, *Mahogan*, while another 15 were missing. But research showed a certain redundancy in the reef's name because payaw is the native word for an artificial reef. Such reefs are not the usual collection of deposited junk on the sea bottom that attracts fish and divers. Rather, a payaw is a double layered bamboo raft under which fish tend to gather to the ultimate benefit of fishermen.

The world's largest sanctuary for sharks was created by the Republic of the Marshall Islands. No commercial shark fishing is allowed in 768,547 square miles of the Central Pacific, an area about four times that of California.

Heavy rains flooded Bangkok and it would be nice if floodwaters passed through the city before the next high tide. One politician tried something novel. He had eight 400hp tugs tie to a bridge span and then drop back downstream. There they operated at full power for a day. He claimed that flow in the Noi River increased by 57%.

Imports

In one week, Columbian police seized two drug carrier submarines. The larger one, probably belonging to the guerilla group FARC, can carry ten tons and operate five metres deep for up to ten days. Authorities thought the sub had been used to carry drugs from Columbia to Central America, a transit point for shipments to the US.

Nasties and Territorial Imperatives

Pirates boarded many ships, crews resisted in various ways and quite often the pirates gave up and left. The crew of the tanker *Northern Bell* activated its Ship Security Alert System and successfully stayed in the (presumably locked) engine room.

The *Pacific Express* made evasive maneuvers and its anti-piracy measures thwarted several boarding attempts. As they departed, pirates fired several rocket rounds into the ship and it caught fire. Eventually, the Italian destroyer *Andrea Doria* came to the rescue and the ship made it to Mombasa. Among the fire losses were 17 school buses.

And in the same general area off Mombasa, anti-piracy measures kept the geared bulker *An Ning Jiang* from being boarded.

But in the Gulf of Aden, pirates attacked the French catamaran *Tribal Kat*, killed the owner and dumped his body overboard and took off with his wife. Forces from the Spanish amphibious warship *Galicia* rescued her and seven pirates were detained.

Elsewhere, violence was at lower levels. In Sumatra, robbers boarded the tanker *Fairchem Birdie* in the Dumai Inner Anchorage, threatened a guard and escaped with some ship's stores.

In Indonesia, robbers boarded the tug-boat *GM Shine* and escaped with the crew's personal belongings and the ship's GPS. They disconnected all electronics before departing.

Off Nigeria, the 8,000-ton tanker *Kemepade* went missing from the Lagos anchorage. About a week later, the ship was

found in a shipyard in Ghana with its IMO number removed.

In a move that dismayed many, Spain OK'd use of high caliber weapons (such as tripod mounted 12.7mm heavy machine guns) by non-military vessels at risk from Somali pirates. The move was obviously aimed at protecting the Spanish commercial fishing fleet operating out of the Seychelles. About the same time, Egypt banned carriage of arms through the Suez Canal, and sensitive coastal ports may follow suit.

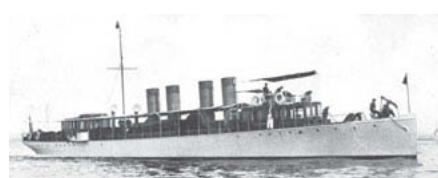
Odd Bits

Here's how accidents happen. It was the master's birthday and maybe everyone celebrated too much but the second mate ran the partly loaded container ship *Rena* onto Astrolabe Reef, a well-charted and visible danger off the New Zealand port of Tauranga, at 17.8 knots in the early morning. Reportedly, he spotted a radar beacon some 20 miles away that was near the pilot station and he aimed the ship for the beacon without checking a chart for possible obstacles such as Astrolabe Reef. (One is reminded of the stranding of *HMS Nottingham* at Lord Howe Island in the Tasman because somebody left a diver atop the chart symbol for Wolf Rock.) Soon the fore part of the ship was hard aground and heavy seas progressively crushed the ship's double bottom, breaking pipes that leaked bunker oil. The ship's list increased and containers started breaking away. Then the hull split from one side, probably under the hull, and up the other side. As I write this the list is 22°, the stern section is wagging like the tail of a dog but may now rest on the bottom and salvage workers are fighting waves of bad weather in their efforts to remove more oil.

The 104,271gt bulker *BW Odel* loaded a cargo of iron ore in Brazil, destination China. But back in May at Mauritius, water was observed pooling on top of the cargo. That could have led to liquefaction of the cargo and that could produce excessive and possibly fatal listing. Due to its deep draft, the ship could not enter Port Louis at Mauritius and must go somewhere before the cyclone season starts. (As this column is written, the ship was still near Port Louis.)

A report stated that the three masted sail training vessel *Concordia* was overwhelmed and sank off Brazil last year due to inexperience and lack of action by the ship's officers. The master claimed that the vessel was hit by a microburst, but the Canadian board decided it was an ordinary squall. All 64 students and staff were rescued well offshore after spending 40 hours in a life raft.

The Fleet Air Arm's Westland Wessex helicopter, XT468, that rescued troops from the fire stricken landing ship *Sir Galahad* and went to the aid of the also fire stricken, helicopter-carrying merchantman *Atlantic Conveyor* during the Falklands War was sold to be used as a background prop for laser tag games. When the chopper's history was learned, it was promoted to become a venue for children's lunches.



"Swim, Randy! Swim for shore!"

"Right!" I yelled back at my brother-in-law, but swimming wasn't easy. The water temperature was somewhere in the 40s and the outgoing tide was sweeping me downriver at an alarming rate. I knew the guys wouldn't be able to get to me quickly. I also knew I wasn't going to drown and become another tragic Saco River statistic for 2008. We'd already had too many of them. But swimming was tough and I was getting cold fast.

Thank God for the life jacket. When I popped to the surface, the life jacket turned me on my back and kept me there. I liked that. I liked breathing air. Once I realized the life jacket would keep me up, I relaxed a little and let the panic subside. I told myself, "You're not gonna die. Not today anyway."

I started backstroking for the closest shore, which happened to be the Biddiford side of the Saco River. I flopped my soggy arms up and over, up and over, like some wounded seal with unwieldy flippers struggling toward dry land. I knew the real danger was hypothermia. I knew all about it. As a Registered Maine Guide I had been trained in all aspects of hypothermia and I knew how deadly being wet and excessively cold could be.

I knew I needed to get out of the water as soon as humanly possible but the outgoing tide wasn't helping, nor was the rushing river current. If there ever was a time to panic and yell for help, this might have been it, but I knew there was no one to help me. No, if I was going to live that afternoon it was up to me to save myself. Thank God for that life jacket.

It was late November and we had spent the past four weeks disassembling our marina, pulling out the docks and the gas pump and the finger piers. We were just finishing up a few oddball jobs, and one of them was to bring the moorings in for inspection. Moorings have to be inspected by the harbormaster every other year, so we bring the granite blocks ashore in the fall where they'll be available for reviewing and repairs in the spring.

We'd learned from experience we didn't have to lift the granite blocks all the way to the surface before we could get underway with the barge. As soon as we had the mooring chain attached to the winch we'd take a strain and begin lifting the 2,000lb block of granite off the river bottom. When the block broke free from the mud, we'd wave at the guy steering to head for shore. As we got closer to the marina, we'd lift the stone higher and higher, and by the time we were up against the seawall we could reverse the winch and lower the stone down into the mud.

We had the whole drill down pat and, as I said, we had made these trips hundreds of times before. I think this was our third trip out onto the river to pick up one of the moorings. We fastened the mooring chain to the winch and Eric pulled the hydraulic lever. The winch turned slowly and steadily taking up the strain and winding up the slack mooring chain. The chain tightened and began lifting the stone causing the mooring barge to sink deeper into the water. The barge jerked upward as it took the load and the buoyancy pulled the rock up off the bottom.

We lifted the block a few more feet, then waved at Gary to head for shore. Eric and I hunkered down on the deck, scrunching our heads inside our jackets trying to escape the

A Life Jacket Saves a Life ...Yes, Mine

By Randy Randall

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brisk November wind. The whitecaps slopped up over the deck as we motored across the current. Twenty feet down in the water a 2,000lb block of granite hung beneath the barge. All we were thinking about was how soon we could dump that block on the shore, hurry back to get the last two and call it a day. But that didn't happen.

The block of granite hanging beneath us bumped the bottom of the river and jerked the barge to a violent and sudden stop. I was crouching on the bow, and when the barge fetched up, I just kept on moving. The momentum threw me overboard in an instant. I couldn't believe it. In my mind I somehow thought this couldn't be happening but the rush of cold water over my face convinced me. Oh my God! I was underwater and tumbling and splashing and instinctively groping toward the surface.

That life jacket saved me. The flotation popped me to the surface and flipped me on my back. Gary and Eric were dumbfounded. "Throw him a line." Gary yelled, but it was too late. Even in that brief moment the river current and the tide had swept me yards away from the barge. I automatically yelled, "Help! Help!" but there was nothing they could do. The barge was firmly attached to that stubborn block of granite stuck on the bottom of the Saco River. That's when Gary yelled, "Swim, swim for it."

"Damned straight," I thought, as I swung my wet arms up and over my head. We'd worked on the river for years and knew all about the currents and the tides. I figured if I could propel myself upstream at a slight angle the current would set me over against the river bank and I might avoid being swept around the bend and out into the Atlantic Ocean, pleasant thought. I swam like a man possessed. No, I wasn't going to die today, I kept telling myself, thanks to that life jacket. But it was a long slog.

My heavy clothes were waterlogged, and my arms weighed tons. I couldn't lift them up out of the water any longer so I just fanned them back and forth underwater, backstroking and cupping my hands to get the best effect. Gosh, it was cold. My legs grew numb quickly but my plan worked. I probably swam three times as far as the distance to shore, but the current set me in against a ledge where I bobbed in the water.

I grabbed a scrub bush just within reach, but the branch broke and I fell back into the river. Now I panicked just a little. To be so close to dry land and not be able to get ashore was enormously frustrating. They say as you get colder your judgment and reflexes deteriorate. I resigned myself to floating in the frigid water a little longer and let the current carry me another 20 yards down river.

I snagged a piece of ledge that had fallen away from the shore. I grabbed that rough rock and held on for dear life. I pulled myself up

and over and on wobbly legs stood up on the rock. I'd made it. I wasn't dead but the struggle was only half over. While I was swimming and floundering around, Gary and Eric had reversed the winch and finally detached themselves from the mooring. They raced to the shore and I just crumpled aboard the barge. "Take me home," was all I could say.

I was lucky. Our house was just a hundred yards up the hill from the river. I shuffled up the driveway and hurried into the garage, where I peeled off all my wet clothing and then walked down the hallway right into a hot shower. We decided afterward I had probably not gotten as cold as I might have because of the fleece and the wool shirt I was wearing. The foam inside the life jacket provided some insulation against the wind.

If we'd been offshore pulling traps, or on a remote river someplace back in the boonies, survival might not have been so certain. When someone's life is threatened by hypothermia, it's vital to get them into dry clothes as soon as possible and to warm them up anyway you can. Maybe on a lobsterboat we'd duck inside the cabin and get heat from the engine. Back in the woods we could start a fire or climb inside a sleeping bag. They told us in guide's training we could stuff another person inside the bag with the victim to provide the needed warmth. Of course, if the victim didn't come around we'd seek medical help just as soon as possible.

Days later, we talked about how quickly everything had happened. I guess that's one lesson. Not to overdramatize the situation, but when someone falls into the water it's always dangerous. The tragic deaths that seem to occur each summer on the rivers and lakes prove that. We also learned how unprepared we were to deal with an accident. We'd never had anything like that happen in all the years we'd been doing the work, so we were complacent. We weren't carrying a life ring or reach pole or line to throw.

But more than that, we'd never even thought about what we'd do if someone did fall overboard. We'd never talked about it, and that was a mistake because we had not prepared our imaginations for how to deal with such an emergency. Just talking something through like that when we're afloat or beginning a trip on the water could make a crucial difference in how we'd respond. The life jackets were something we did right.

Every year the game wardens, the Department of Marine Resources, the Coast Guard and the Coast Guard Auxiliary all encourage boaters to wear their life jackets. For an awful lot of people those warnings go unheeded. During the summer we see people in kayaks and canoes and dinghies float past the marina and no one will be wearing life jacket. Like a lot of safety issues, unless you've been hurt or caught in a bad situation, you don't think about these things. We tend to think accidents only happen to other people. But take it from me. It all happened so fast there was no time to think or prepare.

If it weren't for that life jacket someone else might be writing this story. And to think it was such a simple thing, just to put on a life jacket when you go on the water. It will save your life. Believe me.

(Randy Randall is co-owner of Marston's Marina, a "Clean Marina," in Saco, Maine. He has been published in *Down East*, *The Maine Sportsman*, *Northwoods Sporting Journal*, *No Umbrella* and *Wolf Moon Journal*, as well as *Points East*.

Here is the neatest little book I've ever seen, and it still seems current (published in 1938). They are extremely hard to get and cost a pretty penny if one can be found! —Dave Lucas

A MANUAL FOR SMALL YACHTS

BY

Commander R. D. GRAHAM, R.N.

AND

J. E. H. TEW, A.M.I.N.A.

SECOND EDITION

BLACKIE & SON LIMITED

LONDON AND GLASGOW

PREFACE

From time to time when cruising we have needed to buy a rope, sails, an anchor, &c. On most occasions it has been necessary to take the advice of the yacht chandler as to size and quality. There are books in which this sort of information is contained, but they are mostly expensive, and too bulky to be carried on board a small yacht. We have, therefore, thought it worth while to collect "yacht data" in a cheap and handy volume for which there should be room in the smallest craft.

We have assumed that the reader has an elementary knowledge of sailing and does not require to be told the names of ropes, parts of a sail, rigs, and so on.

We have, wherever possible, expressed a definite opinion; many subjects are controversial, and experienced yachtsmen will sometimes differ from us, but we think that the novice will not go badly astray if he follows our advice.

We have deliberately refrained from giving full explanations on certain subjects, i.e. tides, weather, manœuvring, and so on. To have done so, apart from our possible lack of knowledge, would have increased the bulk of this book beyond our intention. Navigation and weather, for instance, would require complete volumes by themselves. Our idea has been to include a few notes, which it is hoped may be useful for reference, and may point the way to fuller knowledge.

We have restricted our advice to yachts up to 15 tons; this is partly to reduce the bulk of our book, but, more particularly, because by the time a man acquires a large yacht he will know enough not to need our advice.

We have consulted the following books in search of information: *Yacht Cruising* by Claud Worth, *Cruising and Ocean Racing* by Irving and others, *The Complete Yachtsman* by Heckstall-Smith and Du Boulay, *Brown's Pocket Book for Yachtsmen* by G. Prout, Uffa Fox's three books, several books by F. B. Cook, Dixon Kemp, and some others, including numerous volumes of the *Yachting Monthly*.

We are indebted to Mr. G. Prout for permission to quote from his book and to Messrs. Pascall Atkey for the use of some illustrations from their catalogue. Mrs. Worth has given us permission to make use of information contained in her late husband's books.

We are indebted to the following for advice and criticism: Mrs. J. E. Tew (our wife and/or daughter), Miss F. Holland, Dr. R. P. Hosford, Messrs. T. N. Dinwiddie, A. Anderson

and Captain Brook Smith of the Meteorological Office. They must, however, not be held responsible for the opinions expressed in this book. Certain other obligations are mentioned in the text.

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A Manual for Small Yachts

I

DESIGN

The newcomer to yachting will probably take his ship as a matter of course, and it will not occur to him to wonder about her underwater shape. He will soon notice that some ships are faster than others, and will hear talk of good sea-boats, easy motion, and so on. He will read articles in the Yachting Press which are full of terms that he does not understand, and will see reproductions of ships' lines which all look exactly alike. We hope that the following notes may enable him to begin learning something of this fascinating subject.

The first thing that he will notice is that his ship is about three times as long as she is broad. Length, however, he will find elusive, since there are many ways of measuring it. In ancient times it was taken as the length of the keel. Nowadays there is the length between perpendiculars (see p. 143), length over all (L.O.A.) and length on the water-line (L.W.L.).

The next thing that may occur to him is that the draught of his ship, unless a centre-board craft, is about one-fifth of the L.W.L., and from this he should go on to consider displacement, which is the amount of water displaced by the ship and is thus her actual weight as would be recorded if she were put on a pair of scales.

The combination of these dimensions into a harmonious whole is the art of design.

We must first discuss briefly what is the nature of the problem to be solved. There are four important components, viz. resistance to ahead motion, leeway, stability, and seaworthiness.

The resistance to a body moving through the water is due to (a) skin friction, i.e. actual friction between the wetted surface and the water, and (b) to the inertia of the water which has to be pushed out of the way to allow the ship to pass. This latter component expresses itself in wave making.

At low speeds the greater part of the total resistance is due to (a). This component is approximately constant whatever the speed.

Component (b) varies at first as the square of the speed up to a point called the critical speed, but after this is reached it increases rapidly out of all proportion to the increase of speed. This critical speed is a function of the L.W.L. For an ordinarily well designed cruising yacht it is given by the formula:

$$\text{Maximum speed in knots} = 1.4\sqrt{\text{L.W.L. in feet}}$$

In practice no amount of hard driving can make a ship materially exceed this figure. The formula does not apply to light open boats which can sometimes be made to partially plane over the surface of the water. 14-foot international dinghies have reached 9 knots and 16-foot canoes over 15 knots.

The chief difference between a fast ship and a slow one is that the former reaches her maximum speed much more easily than the latter.

Component (a) varies with the amount of wetted surface; hence, other things being equal, the more a ship is cut away at bow and stern the faster she will be.

On a given L.W.L. the less the displacement the less water there will have to be pushed out of the way, and hence less resistance due to component (b). For a given displacement, (b) varies with the shape of the hull. Very roughly, the more pointed the ends, and the more gradual the curves, the less the resistance. The shape of the stern

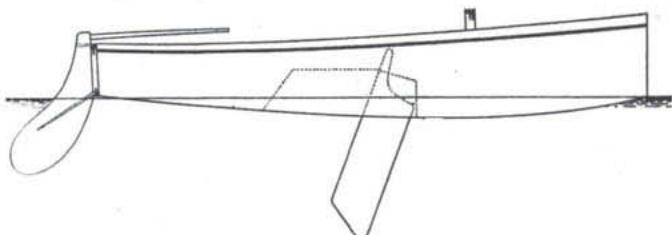


Fig. 1.—Profile of dinghy, showing centre-board

has more effect than the shape of the bows. There is no theory as to what this shape should be and it remains an art of the designer.

In order to minimize leeway when sailing against the wind the hull must have sufficient lateral resistance. This is mainly dependent on the depth of the keel and not, as one might suppose, on its length. Note the shape of a dinghy's centre-board (see fig. 1). Increasing the width of this plate would not materially add to its efficiency.

To resist the overturning force of the sails a ship needs stability. This depends on beam and draught together with the position of the ballast.

Thus, for a high speed we need a maximum L.W.L., maximum stability, minimum displacement and minimum wetted surface. These factors force a racer's hull into the shape shown in fig. 2. The excessive overhangs are for the purpose of increasing the L.W.L. when heeled.

Such a craft will be unsuitable for cruising. The fineness of her ends will make her very wet since she will cut through the waves instead of riding over them. The long overhangs and exaggerated keel entail structural weakness. The deep draught with all the ballast very low down will give her a rapid and jerky motion which will tire out her crew, while the slight displacement allows of hardly any cabin accommodation. The absence of any length of keel will make her unsteady on the helm and unable to heave to.

Fig. 4 shows a heavy displacement cruiser of an old type. She will avoid the above-mentioned faults but will be slower. Although capable of being driven at nearly the same maximum speed as a racing craft of the same L.W.L., in practice she will rarely reach it. She can only do so in a strong wind, so strong in fact that she will have to reduce sail, for the sea if not for the wind, before she can reach it. In moderate weather the racing type much more nearly approaches her maximum.

Figs. 5-7 show a good type of modern cruiser, which is intermediate between the two preceding ones.

Figs. 8-10 show what might be called a racing cruiser.

Fig. 11 shows a well-known larger yacht of fairly heavy

displacement. Note the hollow water lines.

In ancient times ships were generally about three times as long as they were broad. About the middle of last century the big racing cutters were about $3\frac{1}{2}$ beams to length. In 1855 the Thames measurement (see p. 143) was introduced, which taxed beam very heavily, so that racing craft tended to become narrow. To get sufficient stability it was necessary to build them deep with heavy keels which in turn entailed large displacement. This was called the "plank on edge" type of which the *Oona* (1886) was the most extreme example. Her dimensions were 34 ft. L.W.L., 5 ft. 6 in. beam and 8 ft. draught. She was lost at sea and drowned her designer.

In 1888 the Yacht Racing Association introduced a new rule which taxed only L.W.L. and sail area. Under this rule yachts were called raters, and the formula was fixed so that a yacht of say 20 or 40 tons T.M. became a 20 or 40 rater. In time this rule led to skimming dishes with dangerously light scantlings and poor accommodation, so that yachtsmen ceased to build racing craft. An improvement in the rule was made in 1901, but the trouble of unduly light scantlings remained. In 1908 the first international rule (see p. 144) was introduced which led to the metre classes. Under this rule, which remains in force in a modified form, a minimum table of scantlings is prescribed.

Cruising yachts have to some extent followed the design of racing yachts. Readers of Worth's *Yacht Cruising* will notice that the yachts there described are rather narrow and deep. The modern tendency is to build yachts with rather more beam and lighter displacement. It is instructive to compare the lines of *Tern III* (*Yacht Cruising*) with those of *Tern IV* (*Yacht Voyaging*). We suspect *Tern III* of being slow. *Tern IV* has lighter displacement for her size.

The following table shows what might be called the average dimensions of a modern yacht. It has been compiled by taking a mean of the designs published in the *Yachting Monthly* during the last few years.

It must be emphasized that these dimensions are not to be considered in any way the best. If one of them is altered the others will alter too and you may still have an entirely satisfactory ship. For instance, if the beam is decreased the draught and displacement will increase. We think, however, that they will be useful as a standard of comparison for use when you hear the words, light, narrow, deep, &c., applied to yachts.

5 METRE YACHT "PINHURST"
— SAIL PLAN —
Laurent Giles & Partners
Architects: Lymington

Fig. 3

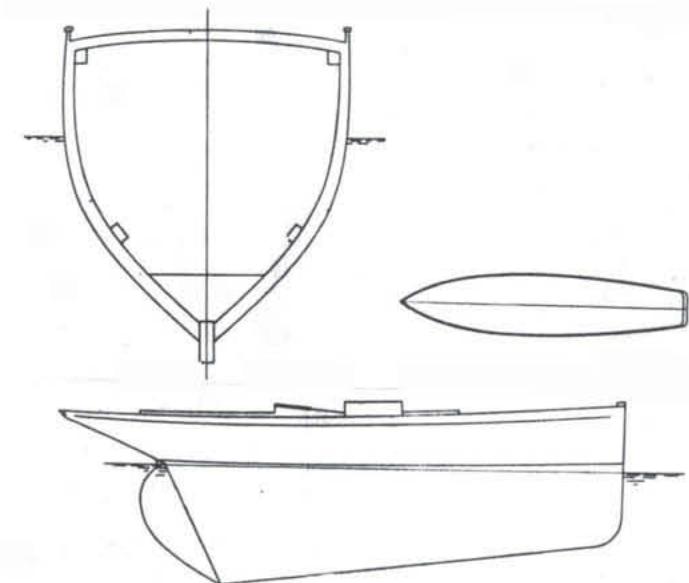
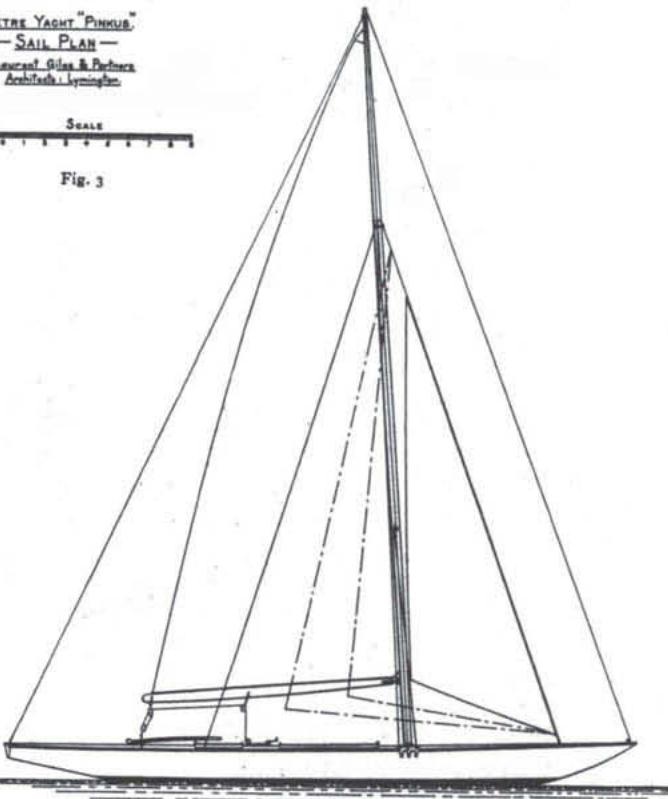
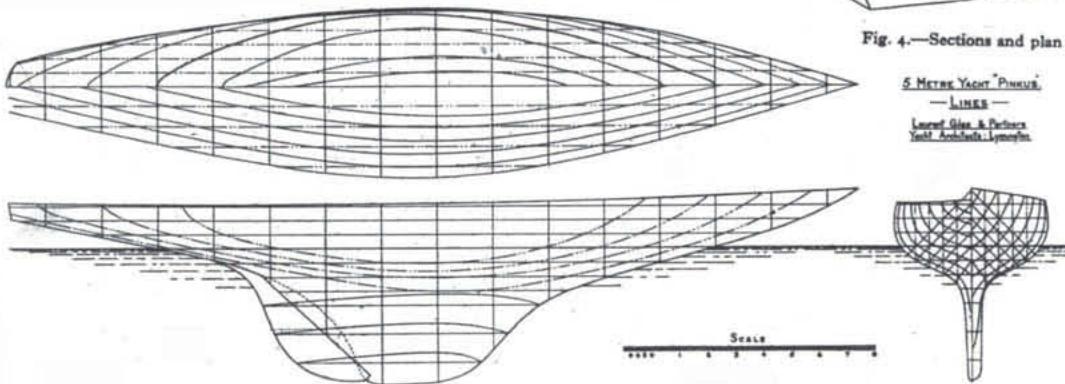


Fig. 4.—Sections and plan of old-type cruiser

5 METRE YACHT "PINHURST"
— LINES —
Laurent Giles & Partners
Yacht Architects: Lymington

Fig. 2.—Characteristic lines of racing yacht



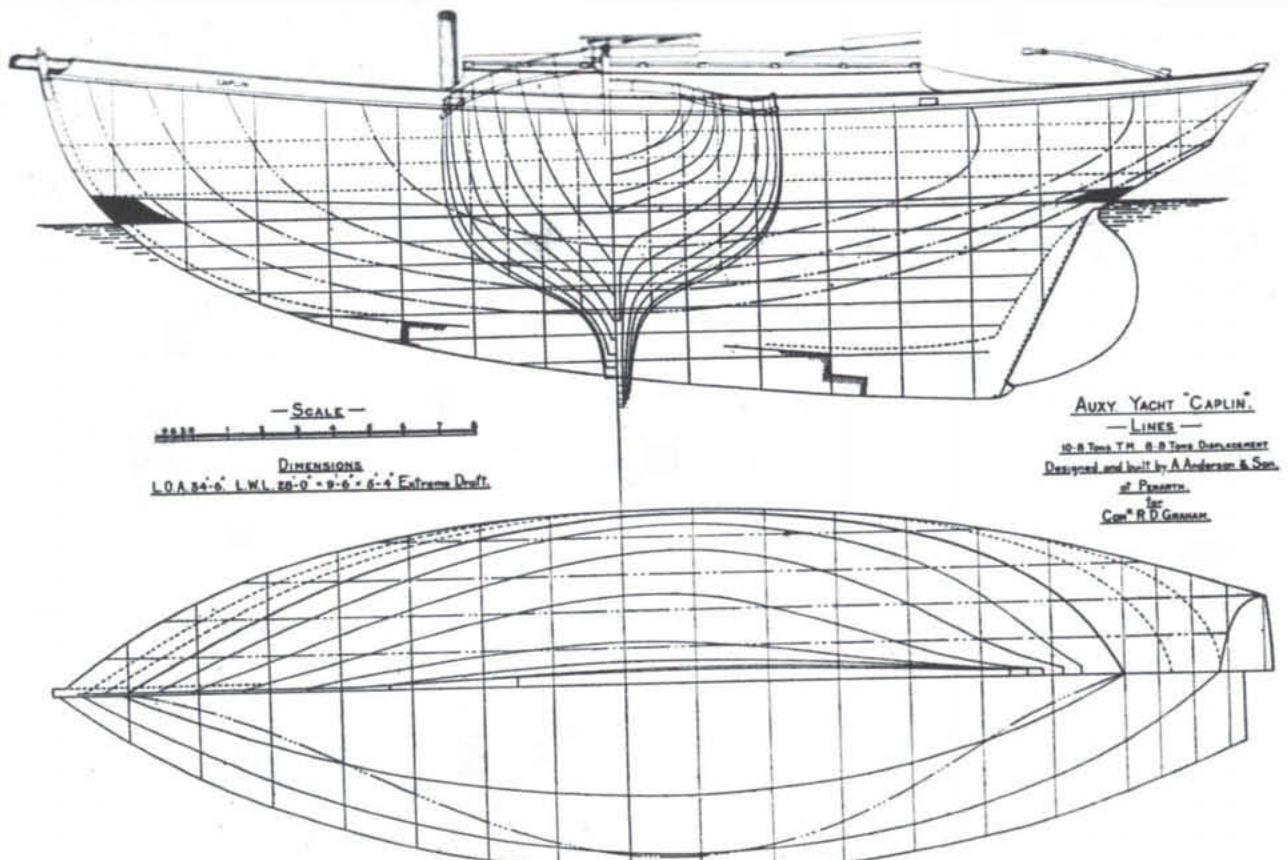


Fig 5.—Good type of modern cruiser

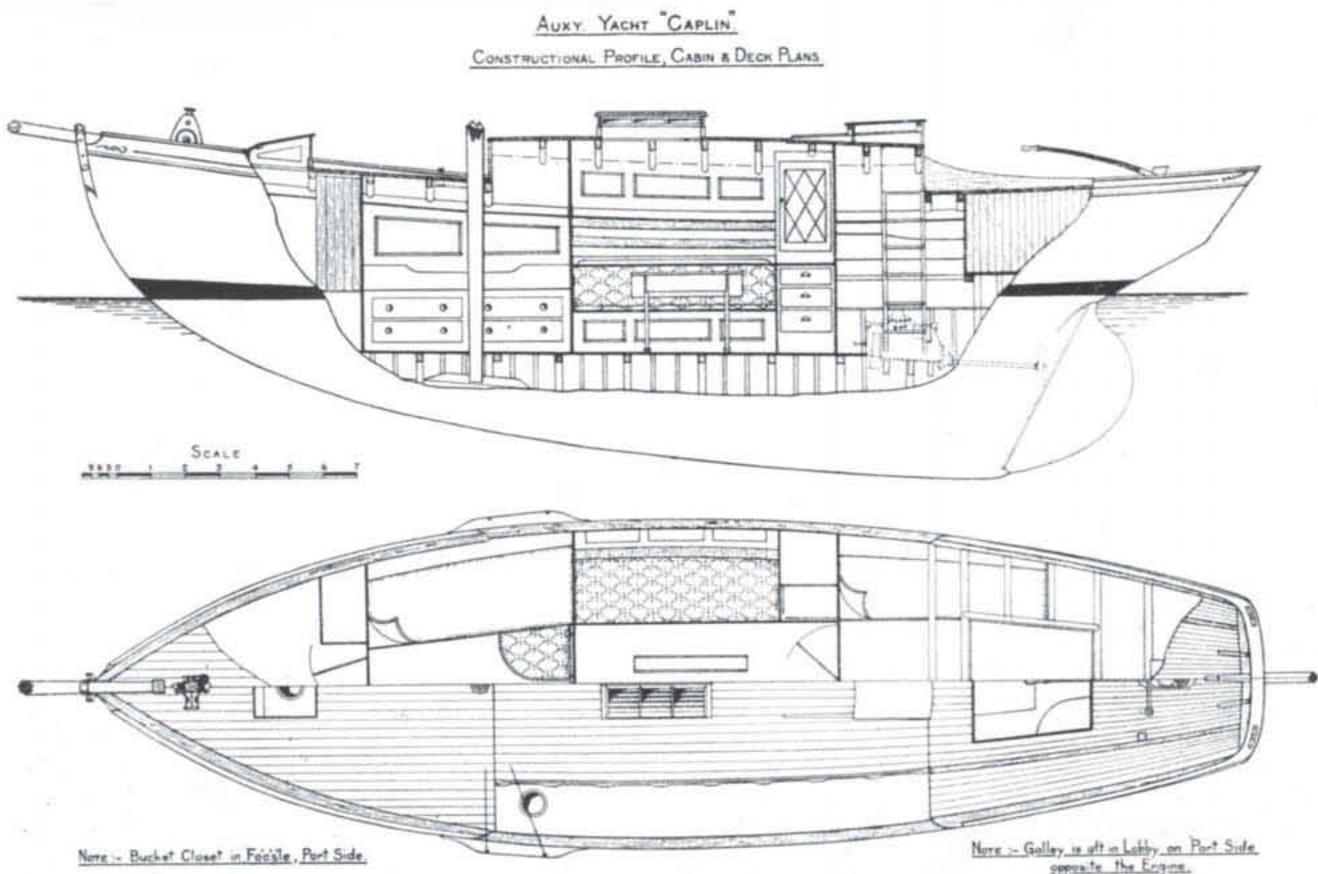


Fig 6

Tons, T.M.	4	7	10	15
L.W.L. . .	20 ft.	24 ft.	27 ft.	32 ft.
L.O.A. . .	22.5 "	29 "	34.5 "	42 "
Beam . . .	7.6 "	8.5 "	9 "	10.5 "
Draught . . .	3.8 "	4.8 "	5.7 "	6.5 "
Displacement	3.5 tons	6 tons	8.5 tons	11 tons

Uffa Fox, a very "modern" designer, gives the following "ideal" dimensions in *Sailing, Seamanship and Ship Construction*. They are based on L.W.L.

L.W.L. . .	20 ft.	24 ft.	27 ft.	32 ft.
Beam . . .	7 "	8 "	9 "	10.5 "
Draught . . .	4 "	4.8 "	5.5 "	6.5 "
Displacement	2 tons	4.5 tons	8.5 tons	11 tons
Sail area . . .	300 sq. ft.	475 sq. ft.	630 sq. ft.	900 sq. ft.

(F 403)

2

Uffa Fox's Canoe
—See Plan—
Drawing by J. B. S.



Fig. 10

It will be noticed that in the smaller sizes Fox advocates a very light displacement ship. Such a vessel will sail well but will have poor accommodation.

Worth recommends a light displacement ship approaching a racing type for yachts up to 25 ft. L.W.L., but for his larger cruiser would have a displacement about 10 per cent greater than the Thames tonnage.

Experienced yachtsmen will have their own ideas as to the best design for cruisers. The authors would prefer a ship of moderately light displacement as shown by the figures in the first table. It may be stated quite confidently that such a ship would be just as seaworthy as a heavier boat.

Ballast.—The usual proportion of ballast is 45 per cent of the displacement. Outside ballast makes the ship stiffer and thus able to stand up to her canvas, but her motion will be more jerky and uncomfortable.

The *Stability* of ships increases with their size. The overturning moment varies with the cube of the length and the stability with the fourth power. A small craft up to 5 tons needs all the stability she can get and so the ballast is best all carried on her keel. Above that size we advocate carrying a proportion inside as we can afford to lose some stability for the sake of a more comfortable motion. The arrangement of the ballast, i.e. whether concentrated or spread out, depends on the ship. A vessel with fine ends needs her ballast concentrated or she may pitch too deeply. Sometimes a ship's motion can be improved by spreading the ballast athwartships.

Seaworthiness.—When an owner is unable to claim speed, handiness or beauty for his ship he calls her a magnificent sea-boat. Seaworthiness depends on the crew, gear, strength of hull and only slightly on its shape. A fast ship may appear a bad sea-boat when she is crashing into the waves and sending aft sheets of spray. Let her reduce sail and she may be as dry and comfortable as her less able sister.

A large cockpit is obviously a drawback, though it remains true that small yachts so fitted have cruised extensively without disaster.

Freeboard should be adequate. Worth advises a minimum $2\frac{1}{2}$ in. for every foot of beam.

Generally any yacht that is not an out-and-out racer can be made a good sea-boat.

The shape of the stern is important. There are four main types:

1. *Transom*.—In this type the stern ends in a flat board at a greater or lesser angle to the vertical. It is the cheapest form to build so that you get most boat for your money, but we do not like it.* In a seaway the flat stern is at times immersed and must drag heavily. When running, a transom-sterned ship will not always lift sufficiently to the overtaking waves, and may ship water over the stern or quarter.

2. *Counter*.—Provided that it is not too long and narrow we think this is the best type. An exaggerated counter might cause a ship to broach-to when running, but a well-designed one will give the necessary lift without the broaching-to tendency. It should be V-shaped, not flat.

3. *Canoe*.—In this type the rudder comes up through a trunk as in the counter type, the only difference being that the above-water lines are rounded off to a point. It gives less deck space and is more expensive to build, and we do not think it has any advantage over the counter.

4. *Norwegian Type*.—The stern is pointed and the rudder is hung outboard. This entails an excessively raking stern-post which adversely affects steering. It has the substantial advantage that the rudder fittings are accessible.

The foregoing remarks apply to keel yachts and not to centre-board craft. The latter cannot be expected to sail as well as the former. Beating in a seaway the flat-bottom slams on the waves stopping headway and causing excessive leeway. To get sufficient stability the beam must be great. This makes the ends short, so that she piles up a big wave when reaching. When running she may outdistance a keel

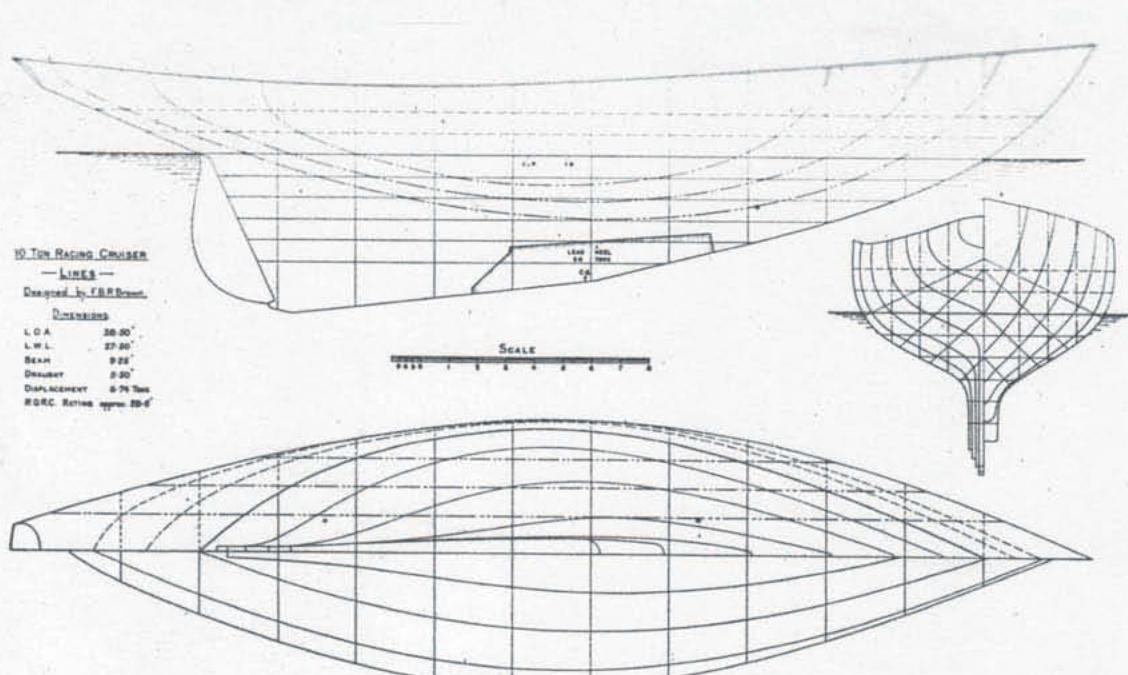


Fig. 8

yacht. The centre-board case divides up the cabin awkwardly and the shallow draught prevents adequate headroom.

Where cruising is mostly confined to an estuary the shallow draught may be a compensating advantage. A very useful point is that she can take the ground upright. A centre-board boat will generally have such a large cockpit that a long sea passage will be none too safe.

The reader may be puzzled by some of the terms which he finds in the yachting press.

Turn of the Bilge.—The ship's side is vertical above water while her bottom approaches the keel at an angle. The

area in which the turn is made is the turn of the bilge. A hard or firm bilge is where this turn is sharp. This type has great initial stability. An easy or weak bilge is where this turn is gentle. Such a craft is easily heeled at first and will need her ballast low down if she is not to be crank. The bilge may be high or low, which terms explain themselves.

Flat Floors.—Remembering that "floor" is the technical name for the horizontal member of wood or iron, which connects the frames to the keel (see fig. 13), this term explains itself. The planking will be nearly horizontal where it joins

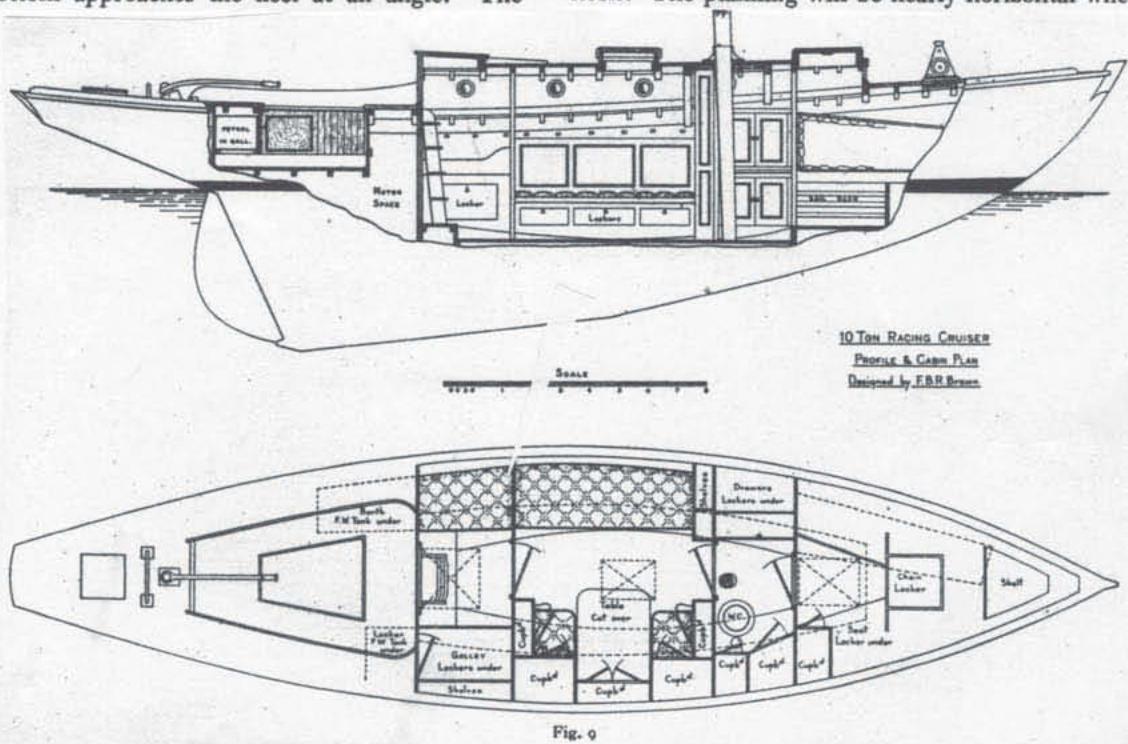


Fig. 9

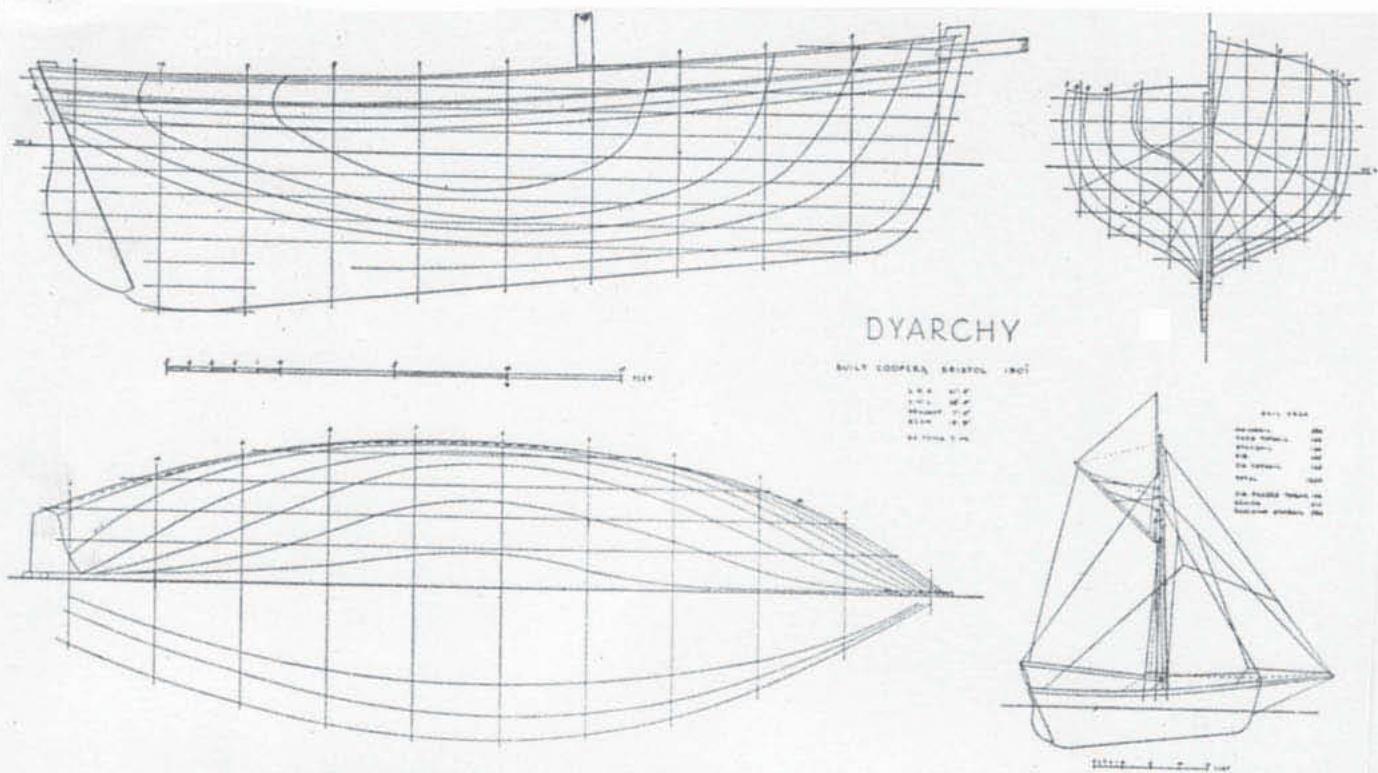


Fig. 11.—Plans of *Dyarchy*, Mr. Roger Pinckney's cutter, of 24 tons T.M.

The hollow waterlines and straight raked keel are typical

the keel, and there must obviously be a hard bilge.

Clean Run Aft.—This is very difficult to define, but it means that a ship must be reasonably fine aft so that the water can flow past her without undue disturbance.

In a diagram of a ship's lines profile and section explain themselves. Water lines are horizontal sections at intervals from deck to keel. Buttock lines are vertical sections parallel to the profile taken at varying distances from the centre line.

Diagonals.—Imagine a yacht floating in the water and heeled to one side; let the hull be cut by a plane parallel to the surface of the water. The lines of the resulting section are called the diagonals. They are drawn in by the designer to bring out any abrupt or irregular curve in the hull that might not be shown up by the other lines.

If you look at a ship's body plan (transverse sections), cover one side with a bit of paper and shut one eye, you may be able to see the diagram take a solid shape.

The following are some of the more technical terms. They are of little importance to the practical sailor.

C.G.—Centre of Gravity of the ship.

C.B.—Centre of Buoyancy, i.e. the centre of gravity of the displaced water.

C.L.R.—Centre of Lateral Resistance is the centre of the area of the profile. If you attached a rope to the C.L.R. and pulled sideways the ship should move bodily without turning. This used to be actually done in the Navy, probably quite uselessly, to ascertain the position for a boat's false keel. When the ship has way on, the fore part is moving in less disturbed water than the after part. Hence the C.L.R. moves forward—how much nobody knows.

C.E.—Centre of Effort is the centre of area of the sail

plan. This has no connexion with any reality since the loading edge of the sail does most of the work, but in practice the purely empirical rule is that the C.E. should be 6 to 8 per cent of the L.W.L. in front of the C.L.R.

Balance.—Very roughly indeed; if a ship has a fine bow she should have a fine stern, and vice versa. When a ship heels, the shape of the hull below water is obviously different from when she is upright. This might cause a ship to trim by the head or by the stern when heeled. A balanced ship does not alter her trim.

In practice, if a ship grieves (turns sharply) to windward when heeled, it is because the bow end becomes finer than the after end; this causes the bow to sink. The C.L.R. moves forward; the water presses sideways against the lee side and the ship swerves to windward; she is said to be badly balanced.

There are various theories in the air such as the metacentric shelf theory, but they are not yet universally accepted. The word balance is also used with regard to the sail plan and the relative positions of the C.E. and C.L.R.

A yacht with a well-balanced hull will sail herself with the helm lashed. It is also stated that a ship which will sail herself will heave-to well.

Metacentre.—Draw a line vertically through the C.G. As the ship heels the shape of the displaced water changes and the C.B. moves outboard from the centre line. Draw a line vertically through the new C.B. Where this line cuts the first line which is now inclined, is the metacentre. The metacentric height is the distance of this point from the C.G. For small angles of heel the metacentric height is constant. Draw a diagram if you really wish to understand this, but it has no practical importance.

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AREY'S POND BOAT YARD

NEWSLETTER
FALL 2011

Staff Changes

We have bidden an emotional farewell to our yard manager, Kenny Gilidden, who retired in early October. We are pleased that Kenny chose Arey's Pond as the last stop in his distinguished career. Kenny, a Vietnam veteran, has been one of the most loyal and outstanding employees we have ever had. Before coming to Arey's Pond, he operated his own business in Brewster and then worked at two other boatyards, where

he did just about everything. Kenny's good humor and endless patience will be missed at the Pond, we wish him the best in his future endeavors.

Over the prior month, Kenny helped to orient our new service manager, Dean Meehan. Dean has a passion for sailing and he looks forward to implementing the skills that he honed as facilities manager at the Hyannis Yacht Club.



Employees, customers and friends gathered at the boat house to bid goodbye to Kenny (standing center).

Boat Building

Our third wooden 14' Catboat was launched in June at the Woodenboat Show in Mystic, Connecticut.



Newport Boat Show

In September Arey's Pond Boat Yard was well represented by ambassadors Arey's Cat 14' *Sweet* (dark hull) and Arey's Lynx 16' *Liberte* (at right). We thank their owners for allowing us to show them. The beauty of these boats brought in one Cat 14' and two Lynx 16' orders.



Cat Gathering 2011

History was made in this year's gathering as, for the first time in the 19-year-old race, small catboats took the top three spots in best overall times; a Compass Classic sailed by Jim Nathanson, a Beetle Cat sailed by Roy Terwilliger and an Arey's Pond 14' Cat sailed by Dave Quincy. (Full report in next issue.)



Gundalow COMPANY

Protecting the Piscataqua region's maritime heritage and environment through education and action

Volunteer Boat Builders

Help to Shape the New Gundalow at Puddle Dock

By Molly Bolster - Photo by Ralph Morang

When construction started on the new gundalow this past May at Puddle Dock on the grounds of Strawberry Banke in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, a team of professional boat builders was hired to put the new wooden boat together under the direction of Master Shipwright Paul Rollins. Every day they were accompanied by experienced and novice volunteers of all ages. Whether it was spinning cotton and oakum, staining the planks, sanding, sealing bolt holes or manufacturing the 'trunnels,' or wooden tree nails that peg much of the boat together, volunteers have been a critical part of the boat building team. The addition of over 20 volunteers working at the shipyard has helped us stay on track to launch later this year. Portsmouth resident Pete Winthrop is one of them: "I was uncertain about what I could contribute as it had been 60 plus years since I had sanded, varnished and worked on my family's sloop. It did not take long to find modestly unskilled projects."

What does it mean to be working on the new gundalow? "When putting in volunteer time of six to eight hours a week, I began to sense that I was part of the team and was making a meaningful contribution. Recently, while working in the interior of the hull, I stopped momentarily about two-thirds aft of the bow and looked forward. The 'spoon bow,' the deck beams, the knees and the hull planking, the sound of the caulking hammer, each was sending a message. This was for real. I took a deep breath and said to myself this is great, wonderful and fabulous."

Winthrop shared the moment with one of the skilled craftsmen and acknowledged that "we were participating in something very special, something grounded in New Hampshire."

Volunteers from left to right in back row: Joe Taylor, Cliff Punchard, Peter Happny, Geno Scalzo, Pete Winthrop, Andy Ritzo, Phil Geraci, Nate Piper. In front row: Dennis Glidden, Paul Rollins, Sue Kaufmann, Nate Greeley, Nick Brown.



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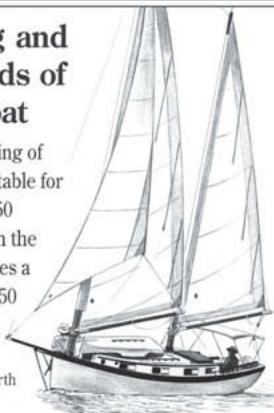
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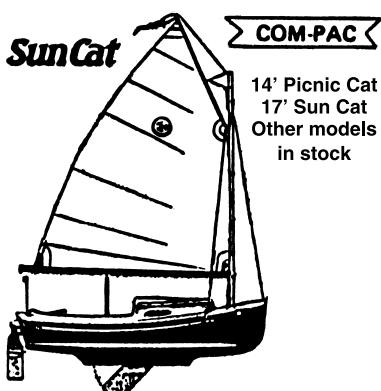
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The APPRENTICE

A Monthly Newsletter of the Apprenticeshop

In the Shop

By Graham Walsh, Shop Manager

Matt Costa, Jared Huffman and Hobbs White are building a 12' Barnegat Bay duck-boat. The project began when a customer living in Maine, who grew up in Mantoloking Bay, New Jersey, approached The Apprenticeshop. She plans to enter the 2012 World Duckboat Championship (or "World Ducks" as the race is colloquially known) at the Mantoloking Yacht Club next summer, a contest with a 40-year history.

The duckboat is a "skimming dish" that evolved from the Barnegat Bay sneak box, a duck hunting boat popular on the New Jersey shallow water shoreline. With an overall length of 12'3", beam of 4'6" and 1' of freeboard, they are known as wet, fast and sometimes tender when the wind really picks up. They are often compared to the fiberglass Laser.

This particular build is different from others in the Shop in that the boat is constructed right side up. Mahogany frames serve as the molds for its cedar planking.



These frames are attached to floor timbers. And, with its lack of a keel timber, the duck-boat draws strength from planking and beveled harpins, which take the structural place of a sheer clamp (the boat was originally intended to be built by amateurs at home).

The apprentices have begun the planking phase of the build. Pictured (left to right): White, Huffman and Costa check to see that the garboard will fit the keel. Costa, a former New Jersey duckboat sailor himself, notes, "It's pretty cool to come back to the boat I learned to sail on. As a kid I took them for granted, but now I have a whole new appreciation for them."

To keep up with the boat building projects at The Apprenticeshop, please see our website www.apprenticeshop.org and our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/TheApprenticeshop>.



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News from the Beetle Boat Shop

(<http://beetlecat.com>)

By Michelle Buoniconto

Reprinted from *The Beetle Sheet*

Newsletter of the

New England Beetle Cat Boat Association

Summer went by in a flash this year! It started out with a trip to Mystic Seaport for the WoodenBoat Show. Jonathan and Marc set up our booth on land with the new Beetle Cat *Patches Too* and an Onset Island outboard skiff on display. The owner of *Patches Too* was nice enough to let us debut his new boat at the show and then deliver it just down the road to Groton, Connecticut, after the show.

Meanwhile, Bill Womack and Bill Sauerbrey sailed the rebuilt 32' Noank schooner *William Bassett* to Mystic Seaport. The schooner was awarded first place for best professionally restored sailboat at the show. Lots of family and friends from Noank and Groton stopped by to admire both the Beetle Cat and schooner, as they both were recognized on their return to their home waters.

Tim and Karen Fallon showed up in the 28' cat *Kathleen* and joined the schooner on the sail back home (photos can be seen on the Beetle Shop Facebook page).

This year we decided to shut down the shop for a day and go for a company sail on the schooner. With a sign on the front door reading "Gone Sailing," we all headed out to enjoy the fruits of our labor and get some much needed sailing time. We sailed out to the appropriately named Bassett's Island in the *William Bassett*, dropped anchor for lunch and

At the dedication of plaque to the Edgewood YC are from the left: Peter Haydon, Michael Glancy, Bill Womack, Jeff Lanphear (Commodore), Wells Pile, and Charlie York.



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then sailed back. We were all shocked upon coming ashore by the scorching temps and what turned out to be a record hot day (102°). It was a perfect way to beat the heat, relax and savor the time together on the water.

Next event was the Leo J. Telesmanick Beetle Cat Championships at Weekapaug YC in Westerly, Rhode Island, on August 6 and 7. Mark Williams brought down a boat from the shop so that Bill Womack and his two grand-kids could race with him. *Filippo* (10) made his Beetle Cat racing debut Saturday morning and *Isabella* (12) Saturday afternoon, while I watched and took photos.

The Annual Meeting of the NEBCBA was held that evening, highlighted by Bill Womack's presentation of a special Beetle Cat Plaque to Edgewood Yacht Club to replace ones lost in the fire. Festivities continued on into the evening with a clambake. Weekapaug Yacht Club did a wonderful job once again hosting this event.

Hurricane Irene brought an early end to summer for many Beetle Cat sailors. With half of our crew on vacation in August, that left only Jonathan, Marc and Manny to haul over 30 Beetle Cats in the three days prior to the storm. As it turned out, hauling was the smart thing to do as several boats that were left in suffered damage. We did end up re-launching many of them again in time for Labor Day weekend.

Our 8th Annual Open House will be held on December 3 from 1-5pm. Feel free to bring family and friends to the shop and enjoy the smell of cedar (first thing everyone says they love when they walk in here!), check out the wood boats and have some clam chowder. Thanks again for all the support and dedication in our 90th year of building Beetle Cats!

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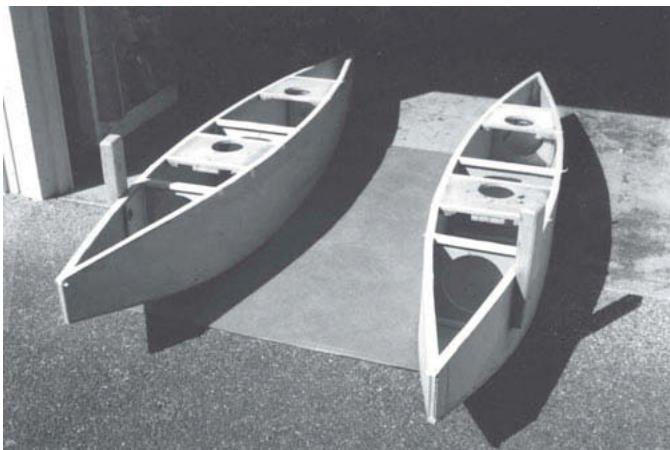
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Fly fishermen like catamaran fly fishing rafts because they can be propelled with swim fins, leaving both hands available for fishing. They are also convenient to transport and are reasonably priced. A typical raft consists of two inflatable pontoons and a metal pipe connector section with a seat. The weight of one we had on hand was 75 pounds, not including anchors, although some are heavier and some are lighter.

Unfortunately these rafts do not row or track well. The oars included are heavy, improperly located and of a poor shape. Locating the frame on the inflatable tubes is critical if proper handling is to be accomplished. There are no locating marks on the frame or pontoons. The inflatable pontoons are round in cross section in the cheaper models and they have a very rounded bottom profile viewed from the side.

The waterline length is usually much shorter than the overall length and this contributes to the poor rowing qualities. Because of the short waterline length and the round bottom profile shape of the cheaper model rafts, they tend to "hobby horse," or dip the bow, with each oar stroke. More expensive models have two tubes for each hull in an attempt to get a better hull shape and do not have this problem, but their weight is greater. They are all difficult to row in straight line.

I mentioned to my friend Roger that some design improvements could be made which would greatly improve rowing performance, and that I had designed a wooden version which I thought would be much better than those available commercially.

He said, "That sounds like a good idea. Why don't you make one and see? If you make a prototype, I'll pay for the cost of materials." So I launched another boat building adventure.

The prototype catamaran fly fishing boat is now finished and it has been tested. It really does row and track much better than the inflatable rafts and is slightly lighter to transport also. I think some of the rowing performance improvement is due to the good Sitka spruce oars. Most of the improvement is because of better hull shape. This boat does row much better than the inflatable rafts which we tested alongside it.

Here are some of the design details. The offsets and hull shape are shown in the drawing. The deck is dead flat, the sides are plumb, the bottom is flat and the freeboard is low. The boat was made to fit Roger, who is quite tall, so another user might not find spacing of the footrests, or the seat height to be comfortable. The height of the seat above the water is criti-

Catamaran Fly Fishing Boat

By Tom Fulk

cal since propelling with fins is not easily done from a high seat. We aimed for a 7" distance from the top of the seat cushion to the water and this seems to work well.

Construction was done over three temporary molds on a building form. After planking, except for the deck, each hull was removed from the molds and completed. Planking was 5mm okoume plywood but could have been 4mm or even 3mm to reduce weight. The four framing longitudinals are spruce, and there are three 6mm plywood bulkheads, one in the middle and two near where the center section bolts on. The hulls are connected by a center section, which includes the seat with adjustable backrest, anchor line cleats, turning block for the bow anchor and rod holders.

The center section is large enough that an electric motor and battery can be added, although I've not checked to see how much these weights would affect fore and aft trim.

The three sections fasten together with four $\frac{3}{8}$ " bolts glued into the hulls, large aluminum plate washers and wing nuts. Substantial interior blocking of $\frac{5}{8}$ " plywood was provided at the footrest and connector bolt locations.

The hulls are fiberglassed on the bottom with 4oz cloth, which is carried up 2" on the sides to cover the well rounded chines. No fastenings were used in the hull except that the deck was nailed on. The exposed edge of the plywood deck was liberally sealed with epoxy glue before priming and painting.

This was an easy boat to build since the parts are small and easily handled in the shop. However, making a catamaran takes a long time since two hulls have to be made and there is some fussing with the footrests, oarlocks and center section. I figure I could make several of my 8' pram fly fishing boats, unpainted, in the time it took to make this prototype catamaran fly fishing boat. The prams also have a weight advantage as they weigh 68 pounds. But you can't pick them up as three lightweight pieces and you can't propel them with fins.

Total weight of the raft is 73 pounds, only 2 pounds lighter than the inflatable raft we had on hand. Each hull is 29 pounds and the center section is 15 pounds. Each hull has a substantial handle at the balance point so it is eas-

ily carried like a suitcase to the water's edge where the outfit is quickly bolted together.

This was an interesting boat design exercise since it was necessary to estimate weights, calculate displacement and find the center of buoyancy. This helped decide the location of the seat so that it would be the right height above the water and so the boat would float with the deck level. This worked out well in spite of my general lack of skill with numbers.

The cost of the boat, not counting labor, was about twice the cost of a budget model inflatable so this is not a good way to get a cheap boat. It was, however, approximately one-half the cost of the high priced models.

We call it the "PSC" boat for port, starboard and center. It really works well.

Comments of Roger Fairfield Owner

The boat is a joy to use. It transports in three pieces, two of them on the top of my truck and one, the frame, in the bed. When seated in the boat with my feet in the water, the bottom at the stern is just above the waterline and the bottom at the bow is a little higher. When I'm using the foot pegs, the center of mass moves towards the stern and the stern drops a couple of inches into the water. No big deal.

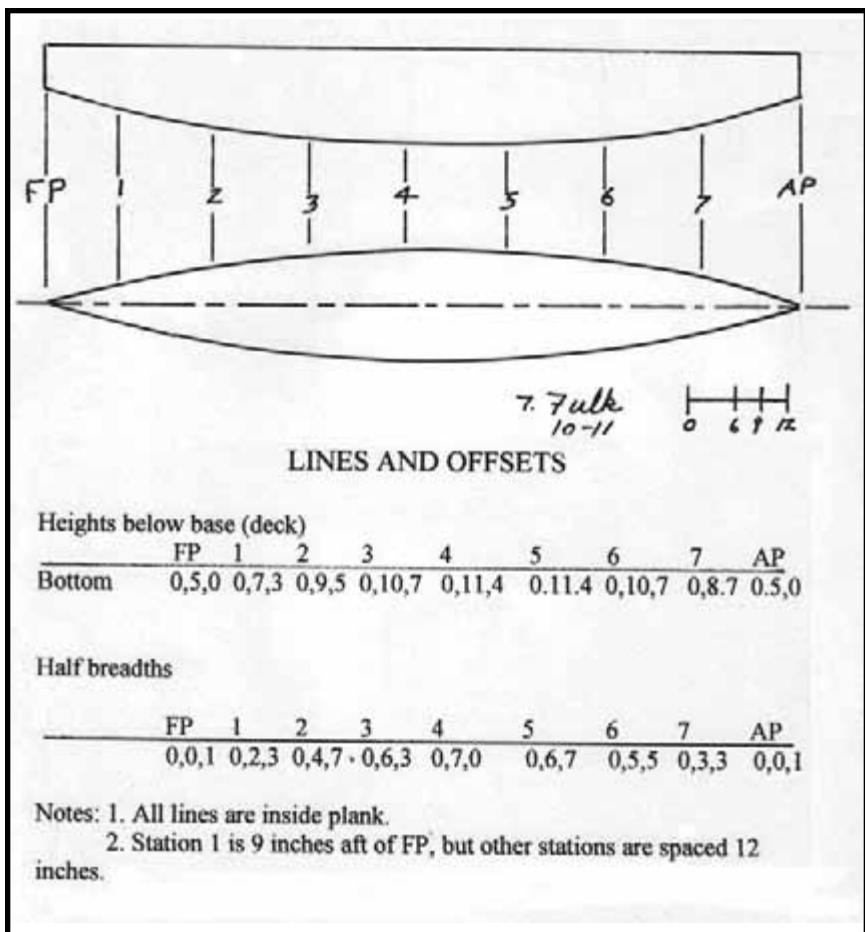
The boat is much easier to row than my other inflatable boats. I have a twin tube Outcast Cougar with which we compared performance. The wood catamaran is faster, requires less effort to row and tracks better. In a cross wind it is still a sail, as is the Cougar. We can't do much about that.

The design has provision for anchors both at the stern and at the back of the frame. This allows the boat to be held in place in windy conditions and is necessary for some of the kinds of fishing that I do. The flat pontoon tops allow the use of inexpensive plastic houseware storage containers to organize the anchor ropes, a stripping basket and tackle bag.

The only things I would change on the boat are the rod holders and the location of the foot pegs. When using the foot pegs, my feet are in the water, causing a lot of drag. When I put my feet on top of the pontoons, the boat went like crazy, with very little wake.

Because the deck slopes slightly towards the stern, the rod support at the stern needs to be a few inches taller. I fish with bamboo fly rods and do not like to have the tips in the water. Both of these changes are easily accomplished and will be done on the prototype.

It was a pleasure to work with Tom on this project. The man sure knows how to design and build a boat!



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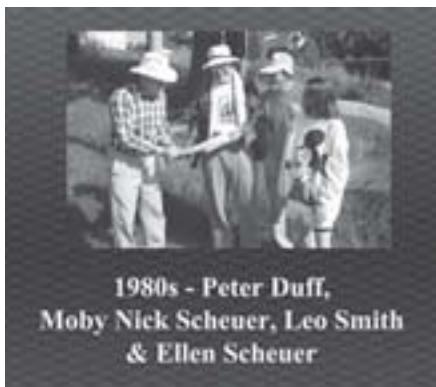
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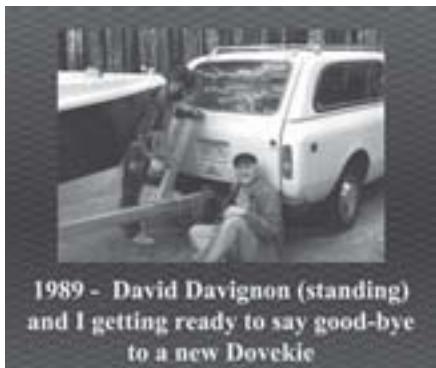
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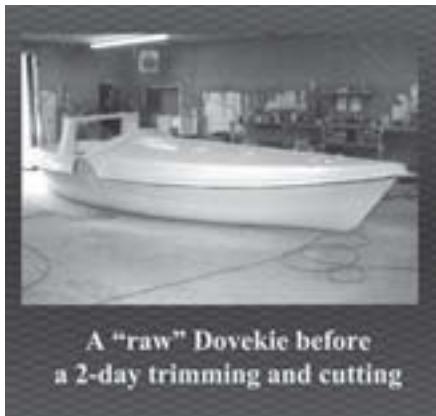
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1980s - Peter Duff,
Moby Nick Scheuer, Leo Smith
& Ellen Scheuer



1989 - David Davignon (standing)
and I getting ready to say good-bye
to a new Dovekie

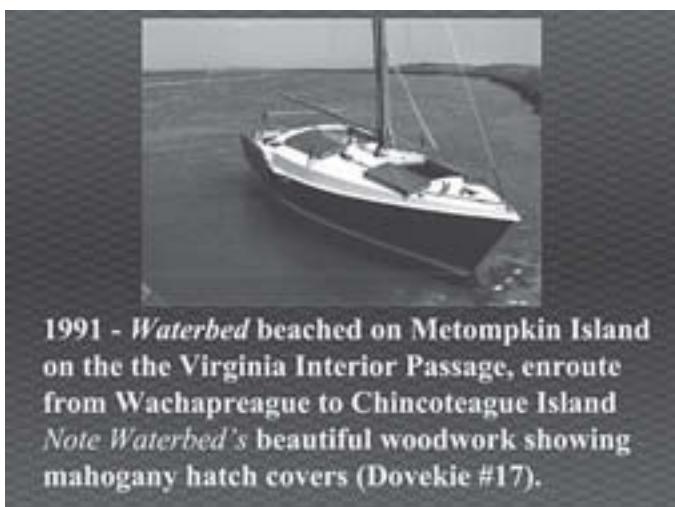


A "raw" Dovekie before
a 2-day trimming and cutting

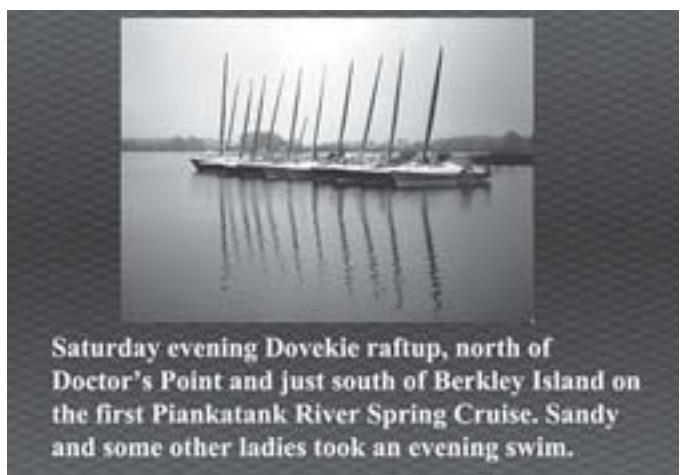


July 1989 - La Trapp Creek, Md.
Three Dovekies, the one on the left is
Dovekie #1 which was the only one
built with two rowing ports which is
the way Phil Bolger designed it.
However, the logistics in setting up a
rear rowing seat was more than
could easily be done and, as the
rear station was not really needed,
it was done away with. I don't
remember the name of the boat

or the owner. The center boat is named *Persimmon* with John Martin and son
Richar. The boat on the right is the only Dovekie that was painted brown
and named *Chocolate Chip* with Dr. Lee Wight and son Steve.



1991 - *Waterbed* beached on Metompkin Island
on the the Virginia Interior Passage, enroute
from Wachapreague to Chincoteague Island
Note *Waterbed*'s beautiful woodwork showing
mahogany hatch covers (Dovekie #17).



Saturday evening Dovekie raftup, north of
Doctor's Point and just south of Berkley Island on
the first Piankatank River Spring Cruise. Sandy
and some other ladies took an evening swim.

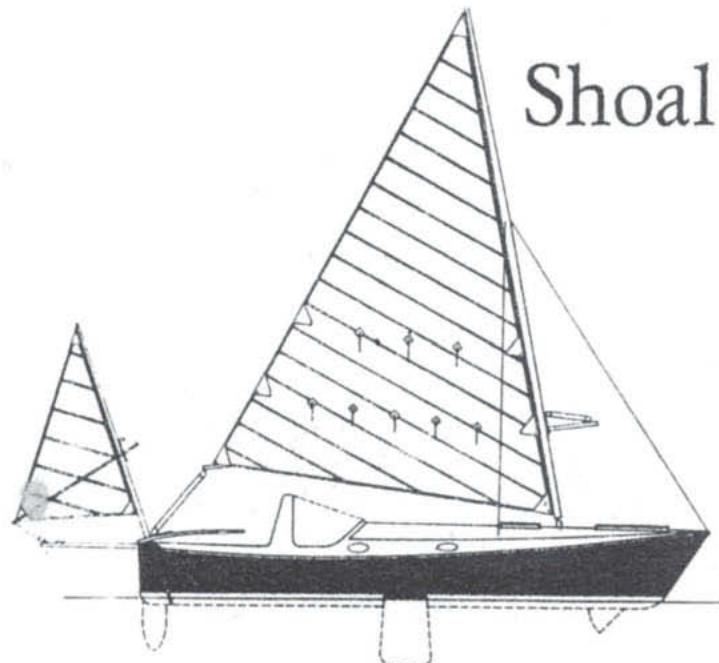


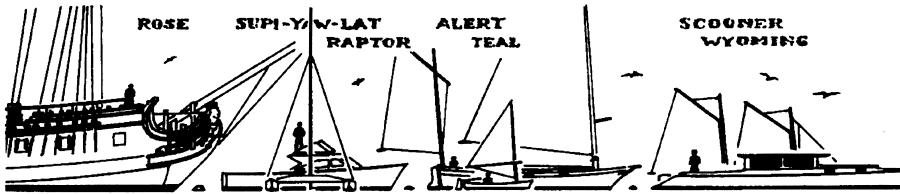
1998 - Prepairing to take off on our Wachapreague, Accomack, VA, cruise with a planned over night at Chincoteague Island, VA. Dean McLeodnes and Mary Slaughter in foreground. John Zobien's Zephyrus next (I was crew in this boat) followed by Phil Sampson in his Dovekie, with Leo Smith and Sandy Lommen in Waterbird the background.



The following four shearwater photos were taken as a photo shoot by Small Boat Journal. The wind was blowing a constant 25 to 30 knots and gusting higher. I really didn't want to do the shoot with a reefed sail, but time was short and the photographer had only the morning for the job, so away we went! We took him out in our dinghy and anchored in one spot and I sailed back and forth by them a close range, (sometimes too close)! With her flat bottom shearwater was relatively stiff and would really lock in at the angle shown in the pictures. She had high sides and I never had water come over the rail in all the times I sailed her! Yes, that's me at the helm thoroughly enjoying my "work day"!!

Shoal draft champions





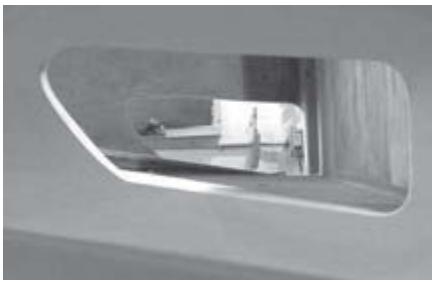
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Phil Bolger & Friends on Design

So far we've looked at a number of structural and functional details. Here are some more in random order.

Scuppers for That Bow Cockpit

The bow cockpit is necessary for access through the bow gate and to allow a gun mount and gunner. If she were to dip her bow deep into a sea, that volume would hold easily a ton of water, something we would not want to contemplate... Rapid drainage is vital.



Picture 1. Starting with the same hole-saw we used for the windows, two sizable openings of over a half square foot each were cut and routed to accept a layer of glass.



Picture 2. Without getting into hinged or rubber flaps, during forward motion this opening has to be shielded against scooping up water. Two layers of 1" ply, rounded and glassed, would serve as a deflector.



Picture 3. Installed, its look and function becomes clearer.

Nonskid on That Large Roof

To fit inside the 40' shipping container she measures just over 7'3" between skegs

46 – *Messing About in Boats*, December 2011

“SACPAS-3” (LCP)

Design #681: 38'10" x 7'6" x 12' x 200hp
 Fifth in a Series of Articles

and roof-top for a door-opening of 7'6". The usual handrails would simply be too tight a fit if installed conventionally. One might conceive of a hinged array to flip up and be locked in place, but it would still be additional height. A system to attach them between container storage would take some careful through bolting with good measures taken to not induce rot and leaks. Since crew should not be carried this high routinely, all that was implied here is to provide reasonably safe footage when stepping onto her roof off a pier or a larger vessel.

Different options were entertained, with sandblasting shot chosen for handiest availability and least cost, much used in a nearby ship repair yard. In the rush to get on, crushed walnut shells and other synthetic softer materials were not entertained further, even though they would be more "sandable" later in the craft's life. With this very aggressive sharp-edged shot installed, chemical peeling would be required to remove it.

Gentle wire brushing might be adequate to rough up the paint between grains for a repainting years from now. This likely is no more work/edium than, say, sanding off the softer material for a re-application and then repainting.



Picture 4. Different sized holes in the lid of the shop container would serve the "salt-shaker" function. To install the shot, we rolled the roof with a rich coat of white oil paint in multiple sections to allow "shaking" a good amount of shot into it before the solvent evaporated too much for deepest "sink" into the wet paint coat.



Picture 5. Once cured, a second coat of unthinned paint was applied to "seal in" the shot. To not tear out individual particles, wearing only socks did no discernible damage during this "top coating."

Wear Shoes on Her Keel and Twin Skegs

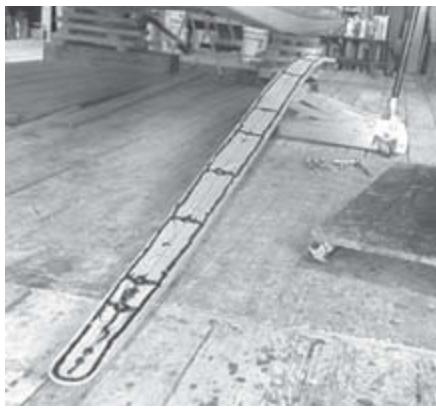
Between the maximum allowable hull height and the cost of putting, say, rollers on that steel plate, sliding the boat in and out of a shipping container has to be done on her keel and skegs, all within the 7'3" height. We used composite decking to act as tough wear shoes, installed via countersunk short and fat lag screws and a "bed" of 3M4200 mastic sealant around holes and edges. With a (messy) coating of grease on the container floor's centerline and 3'4" out from it, she would slide in and out on those shoes.

The only modification of the generic container would be a discrete 1/2" hole at the far end to install a forged eyebolt and a wire block which, together with a matching eyebolt on the hull, would allow running a winch or tow wire just off center of the keel to pull her in via winch power or a vehicle pulling in low gear. Her stern brace with its rubber bumper would stop the hull before damaging the outboard. Likely, though there'd be a crew in her aft cockpit to signal its distance to the rear wall of the steel container.



Picture 6. Startlingly high cost of bronze hardware suggested using the more affordable 18/8 stainless lag screws plus washers. Three holes had to be drilled to prepare everything for the lag screw install. First the large countersunk hole to accept washer and wrench nut, then a hole at least one-third larger than the screw shank to allow some "float" of "shoe" during installation and its lifetime. Finally, a hole into the ply skeg/keel about one-quarter smaller than the shank and perhaps three-quarters deep the length of the screw's protrusion upwards out of the wear shoe.

Picture 7. With a dollop of 3M4200 into each skeg hole upwards, a bead around each wear shoe hole and along its two edges, plus some on the thread, the hope is for a semi permanent watertight seal between shoe and skeg.



Should rot develop anyway, the assumption is that two 1" plywood layers of skeg/keel assembly glued with epoxy will stop that rot halfway up and up to the next joint fore or aft. Regular checking during haul-out for bottom painting should allow keeping an eye on that along with the status of the SS lag screws. Their large hex heads should allow removal before the metal gets too "soft." Paintable silicone-like mastic coated over each head ought to help slow down inevitable degradation in salt water. Based on an impressive example on an ancient boat nearby, someone plausibly suggested roofing tar...

Without our scaring them with a full disclosure about this project and the exact application of their product, the manufacturer of the composite decking did not object to its submersion in salt water, here typically no more than 12" deep. Any other material has its own set of known and unknown characteristics over time in such an application. We'll see how this stands up.

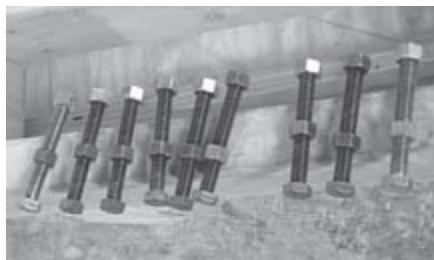
A Fat Rubber Rub Rail to Protect Her Stem Face

Hamilton Marine, and no doubt other non-marine sources, offers several sizes of hollow D-section rubber bumper in continuous lengths of up to 60'. On this project 2"x2" is used for the rub rail and 3"x3" to protect her stem face.

The stem protector had to be "blind fastened" with risk of rot to the vital and near-inaccessible stem structure. Therefore, lag screws were deemed inappropriate. The WEST® System epoxy manual features one interesting option, applied here. A nut on top of a hole guides the bolt while a second nut "potted" deep in epoxy offers serious holding power.



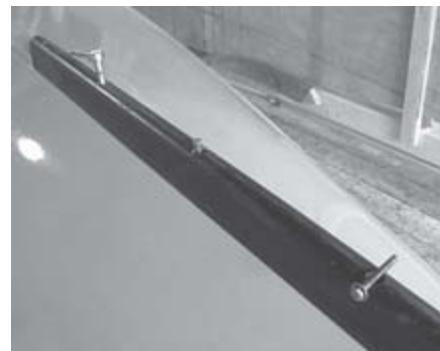
Picture 8. Using a portable drill press to produce a hole properly perpendicular to the stem face surface. Each hole must be just a bit larger than the nut diameter of the fully threaded $\frac{3}{8}$ " bronze bolts. Then all inside surfaces of the hole were well soaked in unmodified epoxy.



Picture 9. The relative depth of the nine bolts and nuts used is shown here; the two steel bolts were replaced with bronze when we received them. Each thread was heavily greased to allow removal of the bolt after epoxy cure. While the hole is still wet, a heavy coat of structural filler thickened epoxy was applied on the bolt and nuts combination and then they were driven into the hole.



Picture 10. Here is one bolt being unscrewed and reinserted to test how the cured epoxy held the upper guide nut and how the now threaded epoxy around the greased shank perfectly guided the bolt towards the lower nut, deeply buried/potted in heavy epoxy.

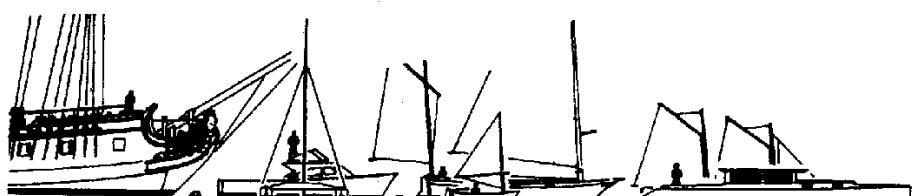


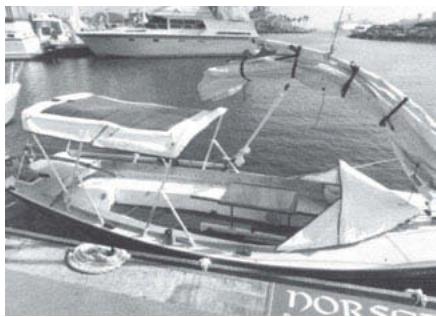
Picture 11. Dry fitting the 10' length of 3"x3" D-section rubber did require significant elongation of each hole through the soft material to match its distortion during its bending over the stem profile.

All this took a fair amount of time. But rot in the stem structure is to be avoided at any cost. And since any rubber will begin to gradually degrade once it leaves the production line, being able to remove this piece and install a replacement is vital. Serving to protect the hull will likely result in abrasion, cuts and rips which would then suggest replacing this "wear" item even earlier. Again, we'll see how it stands up over time. What else might we use?



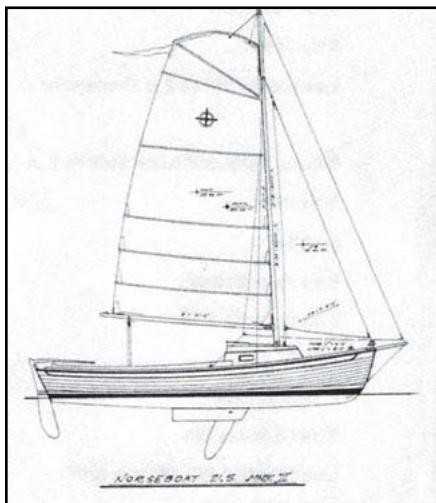
Picture 12. Rosalyn periodically added a much welcome note of levity to often quite demanding work. More on crew dynamics and consequences in general to come. This will have to do for this installment.





First Electric Launch

New owners took delivery of our first electric launch version of our NorseBoat 17.5 mid October at the 2011 Long Beach Yacht & Boat Show. Kevin Jeffrey of NorseBoat traveled to Long Beach to meet with them and attend the show. The NorseBoat Electric Launch features a Torqeedo electric motor nestled into the transom, solar charger, double bimini, cockpit cushions, cockpit table, waterproof stereo and soft cooler that stores in a side locker. The Long Beach boat has all of these features plus the sailing and rowing gear of a standard NorseBoat 17.5'. Their boat is the really big Swiss Army Knife!



Norseboat 21.5

The NorseBoat 21.5 is now being built at York Marine in Rockland, Maine. Builder Mike York and designer Mark Fitzgerald (lower right photo) have joined the NorseBoat team, allowing us to offer high quality production boats as well as semi custom versions of this innovative craft. The sail plan has a high performance cutter rig with pivoting carbon mast and curved top fully battened mainsail. New tooling will allow York Marine to build single piece deck/cockpit/cabin parts, streamlining production.



News from Norseboat

info@norseboat.com



The NorseBoat 17.5 Rower

The Norseboat 17.5 Rower proved how capable it is during sea trials at the NorseBoat Rendezvous in Prince Edward Island in July where the owner, a summer resident of Prince Edward Island, and Kevin Jeffrey of NorseBoat took it out for sea trials.

You can watch YouTube videos of the new NorseBoat 17.5 Rower at: <http://www.youtube.com/results?searchQuery=norseboat+17.5&aq=f>



Norseboat 12.5

The NorseBoat 12.5 continues to inspire customers across North America and beyond. A new customer in Michigan uses his 12.5 as a family daysailer and a tender for their cruising boat. Kids have a blast in this stable, easy to sail craft. A customer in the province of Quebec purchased the full camping setup, which allows him to camp cruise. We are currently building a NorseBoat 12.5 for a customer in the Annapolis Valley of Nova Scotia.



Norseboat 17.5 LightCraft Kit

The first NorseBoat 17.5 LightCraft Kit is being built in Sarasota, Florida, by Dillon Majoros, a recent graduate of The Landing School design program. Dillon is currently working for a naval architect in Sarasota and building the NorseBoat 17.5 kit in a shop near his home.

The 17.5 kit uses CLC's unique lap-stitch construction method. The three-piece planks are first glued together, then stitched to each other and the plywood stations with copper wires to give the boat the desired shape. Thickened epoxy fillets then provide structural integrity, allowing the wires to be removed. A layer of 10oz glass cloth embedded in epoxy is placed on the outside of the first two planks and the inside of the first four planks for extra strength.





In 1964 I built an 18' pontoon boat from *Science and Mechanics* plans, put a small cabin on it, loaded it with 100 pounds of books and an alcohol stove and tried to circumnavigate the East Coast.

I was one year out of high school. I had tried and left both the seminary and college, a half year in each, disappointed and haunted by a feeling that there must be something bigger out there and that I had to find it before it was too late.

A storm on the Potomac and the wrong prop ended the trip after two days and a lot of my wistful, vague imaginings of great things seemed to end, too.

The Exact Moment

Thirty-six years later, in the office of the local hardware and garden shop, I was asking about grubs. The manager searched in a file cabinet for pest control information, and I picked up an odd looking magazine from a pile on the desk and flipped it open to the drawing of Phil Bolger's "Bantam 16-20". I think I became almost dizzy, the similarity to my early boat project was so close and the drawings so appealing.

The store manager said to go ahead and take the magazine, someone just dropped them by every once in a while. For two days I read and reread the copy that accompanied the drawings, hooked by it, by the romance of it, the idea of wandering pleasantly around the country on the water, snug in my little boat with a view of the world. Of course, the magazine was *Messing About in Boats*.

I ordered plans. They came a week later. I had never built a boat from plans and the complications daunted me. I wrote to Phil Bolger & Friends, asking if there was another simpler catamaran type boat in his catalog, explaining that I did not think I was capable of building Bantam.

A few days later I got a call from a woman who introduced herself as Suzanne and, without preamble, said, "Why can't you build this boat?" Taken aback, I explained that it seemed too complicated, and besides, my shop doors were not big enough to get the hull out. "Just cut it in half," she said, suggesting it could be rejoined out of doors. She also said if I built it, it would be the first one. The call ended somehow and, in shock, I decided to look at the plans again to see if I could make sense of them. I liked the idea that I would be the first to build "Bantam."

For two weeks I studied the plans in the early morning before work and slowly

Phil Bolger and Bob Hicks Changed My Life

By Tom David

began to understand the construction details. If I built the hulls in the shop and put up one of the "Cover-It" temporary shelters in the backyard as a protected place to join all the pieces, maybe it was possible.

"Bantam" went into the water a year and a half later, and after four more years of changes to the boat, my wife and I traveled the whole of the Erie Canal, from Troy, New York, to Lake Erie and back. It was the adventure of our lifetimes.

The next year we cruised the Champlain Canal on "Bantam" and in October of 2010 did a weeklong trip on the Hudson on our second boat, a modified Bolger design called "Grinder."

We took "Grinder" out of the water last week, cleaned it up, winterized the engine and put it in the backyard tent. I'll spend the winter dreaming about places to go, about improvements to "Grinder," about possible other boats to build.

It's another life I lead now. Thanks Phil, thanks Bob.



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Power tools are very handy when working on a boat. However, hand tools usually provide for more "feel" when setting screws, tightening bolts or removing same. Also, one is less likely to "round" a nut or mess up a screw head with hand tools. Yes, I have sheared a bolt using a socket wrench. But it was a case of being in hurry and not letting the releasing oil do its thing. In this example the bolt was easily replaceable, but if it had been a stud a lot of work would have been involved.

One suggestion I heard in an engine maintenance class was to go over an engine on a regular basis and loosen, lubricate and then tighten (to spec) every nut that can be reached. The argument was that one would know about a frozen bolt/nut combination before it was too late and action could be taken to avoid future problems. I do not do this on the engine itself, but I do loosen and tighten the adjustment bolts on the generator, water pump and the like from time to time.

Most boats these days are fiberglass, some composite material or a combination thereof. In some cases, power tools are the easiest way to go when working on a project. Some hand tools that are helpful are such things as dental picks (narrow cracks and the like), bronze wire brushes (no rusting pieces later that come from steel wire brushes), a baster to blow out particles when necessary.

I also find a wood rasp of use when dealing with some non-wood projects. I have yet to need the draw knife in the woodworking tool collection. But it is there if I need it. I also have in my library a very good book on hand tools entitled *Hand Tools: Their Ways and Workings* by Aldren A. Watson (1982, Norton & Co). It is an excellent resource on the subject.

From the Lee Rail

By C. Henry Depew
(Tallahassee, Florida)

This month I will be working on a small wooden boat for use around the marina when I want to go across to the other side without walking around the whole basin. To build this boat I need some 14' lumber for the sides and bottom. I have the framing from a Cajun pirogue kit, which I purchased at the Wooden Boat Show in Madisonville, Louisiana, some years ago. I just need the wood and 14' plywood is very expensive, if it can be found.

The alternative is to "splice" (in some manner) two 8' pieces of plywood or go to another type of lumber. I seem to have three choices to join the pieces of plywood. One is a scarf, the second is a butt-joint the third is to overlap and sand. The scarf approach offers the best connection for wood that will be bent to any extent, while the butt joint (with backing piece) is the easiest. The overlap and sand method is one I have read about but never tried. The overlap and sand method is the reverse of the scarf approach. Instead of sanding the plywood down at an angle and gluing the two pieces together, you glue the two pieces together (same overlap as with a scarf) and then sand (taper) the plywood to provide a smooth finish.

The problem with a scarf is getting a good, tight fit between the two pieces of wood. One solution is to get as good a fit as possible and add the saw/sanding dust from the sanding to the glue as a filler that will

"smooth" things out when clamping the two pieces together. I use the saw dust/glue combination any time I need to fill a gap. In fact, I have a small collection of types of saw/sanding dust to help match the color and type of wood when I make up the paste.

C l a m p i n g down the two pieces of wood evenly and tightly is another

aspect of making a scarf. Most information on the subject suggests getting everything lined up, applying the glue and using some finishing nails to hold the wood before clamping. The problem with the glue and sand alternative is the large amount of "end grain" created that has to be sealed. The scarf joint is cleaner, neater but a lot of work.

A major problem with plywood is that after time it "checks" in the Florida sun and, as I plan to leave the boat on the dock, I have tried various painting options to reduce this problem with little luck. The other problem with plywood for boats is sealing the end grain to prevent water absorption and the resulting rot. Since I want a very lightweight boat, I do not want to add fiberglass to the outside of the hull. Granted, the fiberglass covering will seal the ends and prevent the checking of the wood, but it also adds a good deal of weight to the finished boat.

The various epoxy saturation techniques would seal the plywood, but also would add weight and, along with everything else, I have developed an allergic reaction to fiberglass and epoxy resins. Thus, I may be going with a non-plywood option. Since the sides of the hull are 10" I could purchase some 1"x12" lumber (cedar or the like) and live with a slightly thicker hull and the resulting problems with fitting a thicker hull material to the frames, unlike the way 1/4" plywood bends nicely to fit the plans. I will report on the decision and results in a future article.

A while back I received information that Sea Tow was offering an automated radio check. I went to the website (www.seatow.com/boating_safety/arc.asp) to check on the channel to be used in our area of the Gulf. I tried to contact the channel listed for our area and found out that my handheld VHF did not have the channel. Further research showed that my handheld was set for the US channels (a very limited number), while to reach the channel being used by Sea Tow I would need to switch to the International setting.

The next time I have the boat out in Apalachee Bay I will use the boat's VHF installation and see if I can contact the automated channel, since the radio on the boat is set for the International frequency list. Of interest to me is that the handheld's default was the US channel list, the default for the radio on the boat was for the International channel list. Perhaps some reader(s) can explain the difference in an article or a "letter to the editor"?

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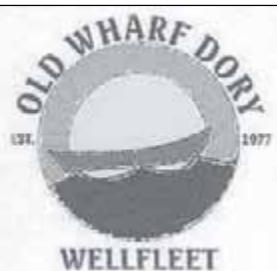


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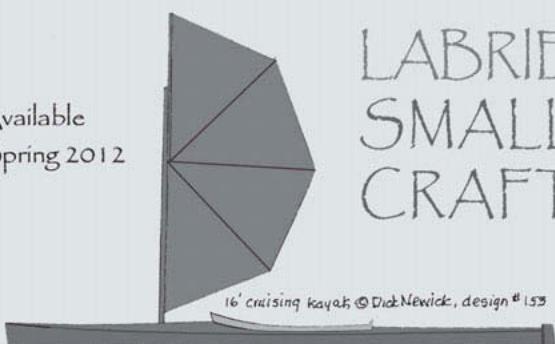
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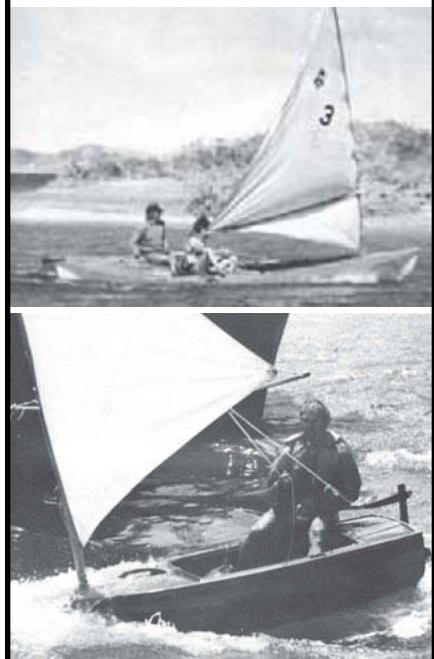
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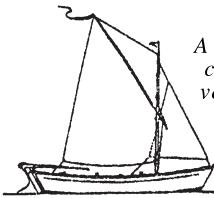


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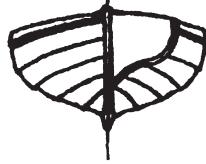
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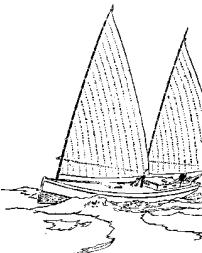
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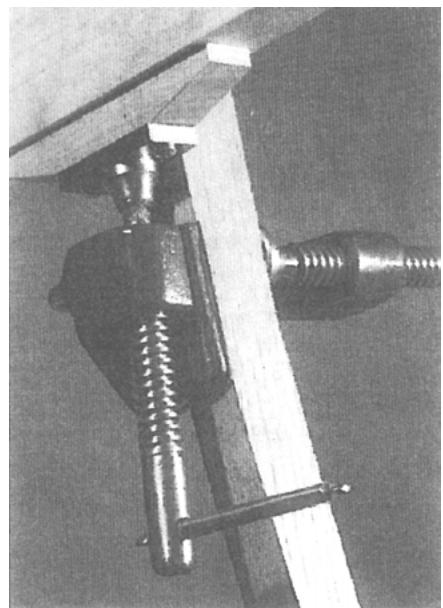


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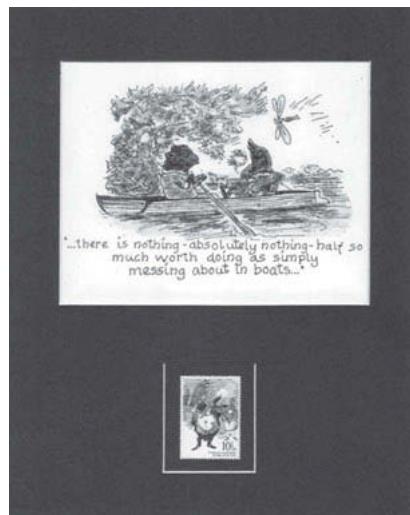
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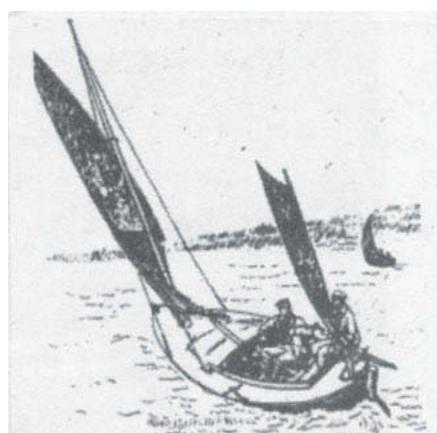
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